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SEAMUS HEANEY

WHEN MEDICINE TURNS EVIL
SHERWIN B. NULAND

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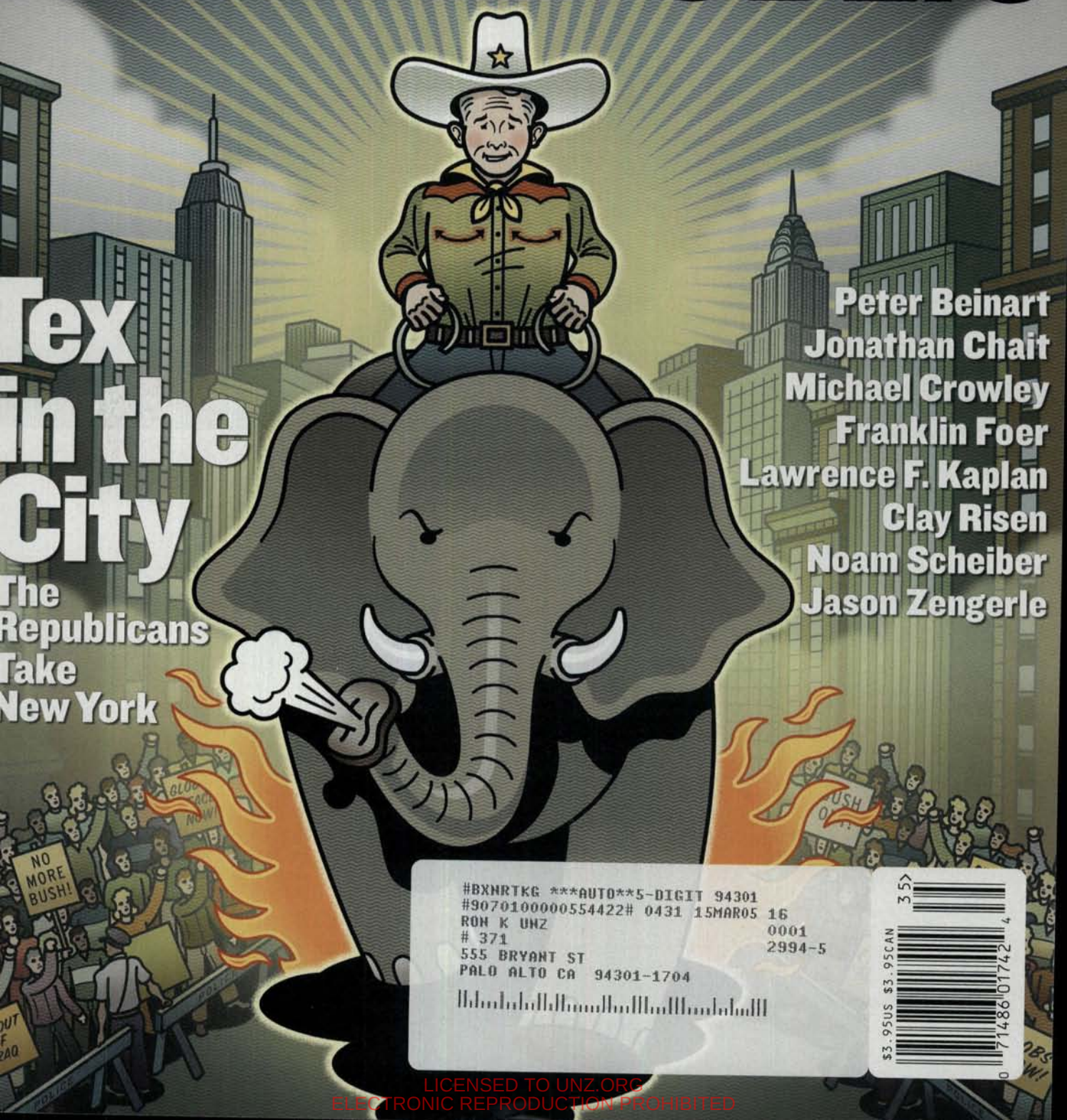

Tex in the City

The Republicans Take New York

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CORRESPONDENCE

COUNT OFF

JONATHAN CHAIT RAISES SOME legitimate questions about the Bush administration, but he muddies the water with his complaint about the lack of "balance" in the Senate ("Power from the People," July 26). Specifically, Chait laments the fact that "the Senate ... gives the citizens in the 30 states Bush won in 2000, which comprise slightly less than half of the U.S. population, 60 seats. The 20 states Gore won comprise a narrow majority of the population, but they get only 40 seats in the Senate." In Chait's view, "balance" would result in "a solid Democratic majority." First, this implies that the states Gore won in 2000 are reliably Democratic in their Senate representation and that the states Bush won are (somewhat less) reliably Republican. But that picture is not really accurate. Of the 20 states won by Gore in the 2000 general election, twelve (60 percent) have two Democratic senators (if we include James Jeffords of Vermont). Of the 30 states held by Bush, 18 (60 percent) have two Republican senators. In other words, in a full 40 percent of all states, Senate representation does not correlate directly with the state's choice for president.

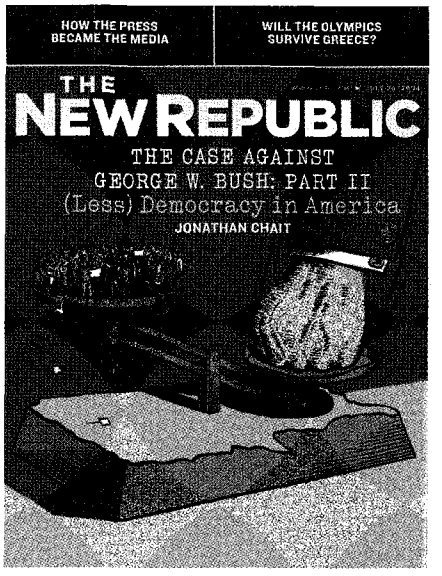
Furthermore, the populations of states with "stolen" senators—Gore states with at least one Republican senator, and Bush states with at least one Democratic senator—show that, on average, Republican senators have infiltrated Democratic population centers more than Democratic senators have returned the favor. Republicans have elected senators in Pennsylvania and Illinois, two of the Democrats' four most valuable electoral states. Democrats, in contrast, have elected senators in only one of Bush's most valuable states—Florida. The general statistics also indicate the GOP's edge: The average Bush state with a Democratic senator has a population of about 4.6 million, while the average Gore state with a Republican senator has a population of about 5 million. So Chait's argument about the Senate fails on two fronts. First, since a state's presidential selection is not an accurate indicator of its Senate representation, it is not at all clear that a population-based Senate would result in "a solid Democratic majority." Moreover, given the Republicans' advantage in electing senators in populous Democratic states, it is quite likely that a population-based Senate would tilt more Republican than does the current Senate roster.

JUDAH KRAUT
West Hempstead, New York

CHAIT IGNORES THE EFFECTS OF bloc voting when he writes that "the electoral college gives disproportionate power to citizens of less populous states." He is correct that the smaller states are numerically overrepresented and that their citizens would have disproportionate power if electors were chosen using proportional representation. But 48 of the 50 states choose their electors using bloc voting, which overwhelmingly benefits majority voters in the larger states. The probability of an election coming down to California's bloc of 55 electors is overwhelmingly greater than the probability of it coming down to Montana's bloc of three. In practice, the power of the voters is more sensitive to being in a swing state than to the size of the state.

PETER ALBERT TAYLOR
Houston, Texas

JONATHAN CHAIT RESPONDS:
Judah Kraut misunderstands my point about the Senate. Currently, blue states have 40 Senate seats, of which thirty (or 75 percent) are held by Democrats. Red states have 60 Senate seats, of which 19 (or 32 percent) are held by Democrats (including Jeffords). Now plug in my counterfactual assumption that red and blue states had 50 seats each, with the same proportion of Republicans and Democrats on each side. Assigning 75 percent of the 50 blue-state Senate seats to the Democrats would yield 37.5 Democratic senators (and 12.5 Republicans). Assigning 32 percent of the 50 red-state Senate seats to the Democrats would yield an additional 16 Democratic senators (along with 34 Republicans.) Thus, a Senate evenly balanced between red and blue states would have 53.5 Democrats and 46.5 Republicans.


HOW THE PRESS BECAME THE MEDIA
WILL THE OLYMPICS SURVIVE GREECE?
THE NEW REPUBLIC
THE CASE AGAINST GEORGE W. BUSH: PART II
(Less) Democracy in America
JONATHAN CHAIT

The points raised in Peter Albert Taylor's letter are true, but they have no bearing on any portion of my argument. I wrote that dividing the presidential vote into blocs of winner-take-all states is undemocratic because it allows the possibility of a popular-vote loser winning an election. (I should have specified that the United States is the only country to allow a president or prime minister to lose the popular vote and still win; some countries allow local candidates the same possibility.) I further wrote that this undemocratic character is compounded by giving some states greater per-capita voting weight than others. My point was that, if the United States had either abandoned state-bloc voting for the popular vote, or if it had kept state-bloc voting but given each state proportional voting weight in the electoral college, George W. Bush would not have won. The prospect of a small number of Montana voters tipping a hypothetical election, while interesting, is not germane. ■

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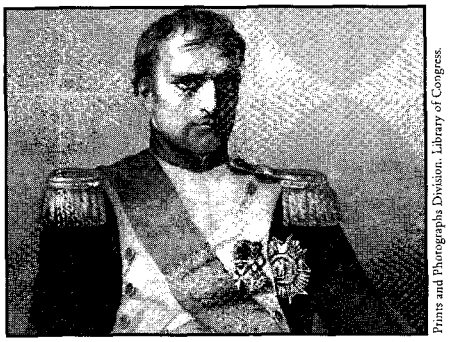

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Great Divide

TRB

FROM NEW YORK

In Boston last month, Democrats wowed the press with their unity. In New York this week, Republicans appear just as united—and the press barely considers it a story. That's partly because journalists expect unity from the hierarchical, disciplined GOP. And it's partly because, on the biggest issue of the day, Iraq, 96 percent of Republican delegates agree with President Bush that "the United States did the right thing in taking military action," according to *The New York Times*. By contrast, 86 percent of Democratic delegates essentially *disagree* with their nominee, John Kerry. If Democrats are deeply divided over foreign policy and Republicans are not, a united Democratic convention is more surprising and thus more newsworthy.

Journalists aren't the only ones who assume the GOP is of one mind on national security. When Republicans are challenged on the discrepancy between anti-abortion, anti–gay rights delegates and culturally liberal prime-time convention speakers, such as Rudy Giuliani, Arnold Schwarzenegger, George Pataki, and John McCain, they usually cite the war on terrorism as the glue that holds the party together. When Tim Russert asked the pro-choice Giuliani last Sunday how he felt about the GOP platform's call to outlaw abortion, Giuliani replied, "[t]he largest part of this platform, however, is the thing that I think is the most important thing in this country, which is defending America, carrying on the war against terrorism." Later in the interview, he repeated the point: "The core views on which a political party should be organized are national defense and the economy, and on those things ... ninety-five percent of these delegates agree."

But do they really? Most Republicans backed the Iraq war for the reason President Bush originally offered: After September 11, we couldn't take chances with a tyrant who had weapons of mass destruction and ties to terrorists. As *National Review* has put it, Iraq "was broadly supported by the Right as a war of national interest. The primary purpose of the war was always to protect U.S. national security." Most Republicans still back the Iraq war because it is Bush's signature initiative—to oppose it would be tantamount to endorsing John Kerry. But it is not at all clear that most Republicans support the rationale for Iraq that Bush has put forward, partly out of necessity, since the failure to find WMD: that it marks the start of a broader effort to democratize the Muslim world.

Asked by the *Times* this week whether the United States should "try to change a dictatorship to a democracy where it can," 41 percent of GOP delegates said yes, while 48 percent said no or that it depends on circumstances. Among Republican voters, the view is even more negative. And, as the Iraq rationale has shifted, a growing number of Republicans have cried foul. Late last year, Nebraska Senator Chuck Hagel warned of the dangers of "ideology" in foreign policy and called for a "principled realism that ... face[s] the world as it really is, in all of its complexities." In May of this year, Kansas Senator Pat Roberts, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, told an audience at Kansas State University, "We need to restrain what are growing U.S. messianic instincts—a sort of global social engineering where the United States feels it is both entitled and obligated to promote democracy—by force if necessary." Later that month, Illinois Representative Henry Hyde, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, said, "It would be foolish, not to say ruinously arrogant, to believe that we can determine the future of Iraq." And this month, Nebraska Representative Doug Bereuter, former vice-chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, called his support for the war a mistake. "From the beginning of the conflict," he wrote, "it was doubtful that we for long would be seen as liberators."

Notice where all these dissenters come from: the Midwest, the Republican Party's historic base and the historic home of American isolationism. In the 1940s, it was Midwestern isolationists, clustered around Ohio Senator Robert Taft, who battled for control of the GOP against the Northeastern internationalists who backed New York Governor Thomas Dewey. Those divisions eventually faded, with Midwesterners deciding that the Soviet threat required sustained U.S. involvement around the world. Anti-communism unified the GOP, and, in the 1980s, Ronald Reagan made it the centerpiece of a Republican electoral majority.

Giuliani seems to think the war on terrorism is to this decade what the cold war was to the '80s: the issue that united the GOP and won over the country. But, in the '80s, the Soviet Union combined an ideological challenge with a genuine military threat. Today, a growing number of isolationist and realist conservatives suspect that Islamic radicalism represents only the former. As the conservative political theorist Francis Fukuyama recently wrote in *The National Interest*, "[T]he Soviet Union could have annihilated us physically and conceivably could have subverted democracy in North America. But it is questionable whether any such existential threats exist now." And, partly as a result, these conservatives are unwilling to put American troops and money behind an ideological struggle they are not sure we know how to win.

During the presidential campaign, much of this foreign policy discontent will remain below the surface as Republicans focus on defeating John Kerry. But, if Kerry gets elected and tries to use military force to prevent the spread of Islamist extremism (say, by intervening in a failed state where Al Qaeda could take root), the Republican Party could well split, just as it did over humanitarian intervention in Kosovo in the '90s. And, even if President Bush wins reelection, it is hard to imagine Republican realists like Pat Roberts supporting a preemptive war against another dictatorship, say Iran, whose missiles can't yet reach U.S. shores.

At least one such Midwestern realist, Hagel, seems interested in taking on hawks like Giuliani or McCain for the 2008 presidential nomination. If he does, the Taft-Dewey split may resurface with a vengeance. And Rudy Giuliani may find that foreign policy isn't the balm that heals Republican divides. It's the greatest divide of all.

PETER BEINART

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Island Mentality

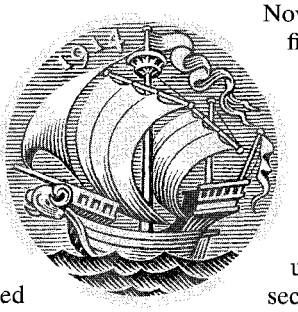
IT WAS ALWAYS clear that the war on terrorism would require a certain amount of improvisation. After all, the threat the United States faces is unique in our history. But the military commissions that debuted in Guantanamo Bay last week—governed by rules invented largely on the fly—are in danger of becoming a farce: a kangaroo court that undermines not only America's already shaky international reputation but also our own standards of justice and due process.

Authorized by executive order and crafted by the Pentagon, the commissions are inherently flawed. They have an unusually low standard for admissible evidence, allowing hearsay and even statements obtained under coercion. They don't require that a detainee be advised of the evidence against him or allow for an independent appeal. Moreover, although the commissions are said to presume innocence, that may be impossible when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has already called the Guantanamo detainees "among the most dangerous, best-trained, vicious killers on the face of the earth."

If problematic in design, the panels are proving even worse in practice. At pretrial hearings last week for four detainees, defense lawyers questioned the impartiality of the five military officers and one alternate who will sit as both judges and jury. One panelist was responsible for gathering intelligence information about Al Qaeda and Taliban forces. Another supervised the transport of detainees from Afghanistan to Guantanamo. And the presiding officer, Army Colonel Peter Brownback III, is a close friend of the Pentagon official who appointed him and who is supposed to direct and review the proceedings.

There are also questions about the military officers' competency. Among the panelists, only Brownback, a retired military judge, has any legal experience. When the alternate panel member was asked if he knew what the Geneva Convention was, he replied, "Not specifically. No, sir." And, when he tried to recover by volunteering that the Convention had three articles, the defense corrected, "Actually, there are six, sir."

But perhaps the lowest moment came when Brownback cut off a Yemeni defendant in the midst of a premature confession of his Al Qaeda membership. Chaos ensued—no evidence was supposed to be entered at the hearing, and the commissions have no protections from self-incrimination. While Brownback instructed the other panelists to disregard the statement (as if that were possible), Arabic speakers contested the official translator's interpretation of the confession. In fact, egregious translation errors were a theme throughout the proceedings and prompted questions about the reliability of statements translated during interrogation.



Why are the military commissions in such disarray? Kevin Barry, director of the National Institute of Military Justice, suggests: "This is a new trial system no one has ever operated in. ... The rules are kind of made up as we go along." Preventive detention and some form of military trial may be better than traditional courts for dealing with the unprecedented threats the United States faces. But ad hoc procedures are no way to establish good legal doctrines—which are what we desperately need.

Thus far, the executive branch has claimed absolute authority over the Guantanamo detainees, and the courts have allowed the White House and the Pentagon overly broad discretion. But rules governing a situation this novel and this important should not be left to the courts anyway; they should be defined by the legislature. Congress should stop shirking its responsibility and pass a comprehensive terrorism bill that authorizes the White House to detain enemy combatants but makes explicit their rights during detention and the procedures under which they will be brought to justice. Of course, it's unlikely that Congress will act before the November election. But the first Guantanamo trials won't actually begin until early next year. There's still time to establish a fair, independent process that can safeguard individual rights—without undermining national security—and help repair the serious damage the Guantanamo detentions have done to America's reputation. Because our legal proceedings are necessarily reflections of our standards and values, what happens at Guantanamo is not just about the men in the orange jumpsuits. It's about holding ourselves to standards we can hold up to the world and be proud of at home. ■

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NOTEBOOK

Missing in New York: Democracy, Humor, and Spontaneity

NOTABLE ABSENCE

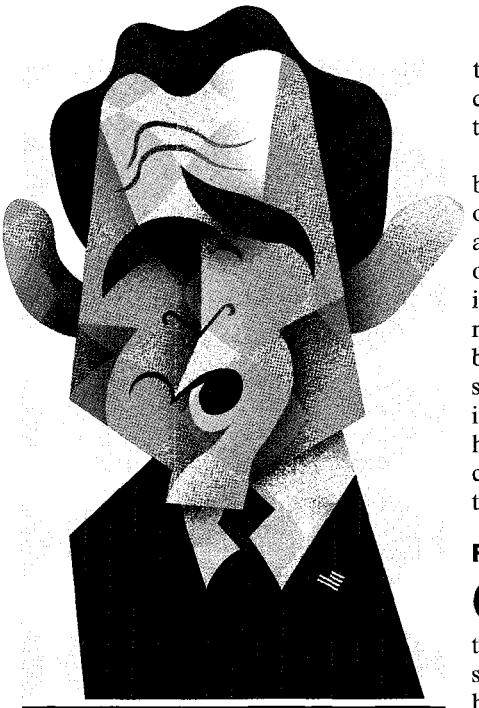
One interesting thing about John McCain's and Rudy Giuliani's convention speeches: Despite defending the war in Iraq, neither of them ever mentioned the word "democracy." There were plenty of references to "freedom" and some to "accountable" governments, but no mention of the signature word so central to George W. Bush's vision of the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism in general. It's a testament to how much Republicans have tacitly ratcheted down expectations for the Iraq war, even while claiming to believe in it more than ever.

FOREIGN TERRITORY

Monday night's performances by McCain and Giuliani spurred lots of discussion about both men's prospects for 2008. Most of the speculation about the problems they would face in a Republican primary has centered on the fact that their views on taxes (McCain) and social issues (Giuliani) are anathema to conservatives. But the issue that could actually sink both men is the war in Iraq.

We are amazed by the hostility to the war expressed by grassroots conservatives here in New York. Monday night, at a party at the New York Yacht Club thrown by liberal boogeyman Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform, we couldn't find a defender of the war. Granted, Norquist's instincts since the end of the cold war are fairly isolationist, so his gathering attracted many similarly minded Republicans. But it's still surprising to hear how unpopular the war has become among some on the right. One guest told The New Republic that antiwar sentiment among conservatives is "like a virus that is rapidly spreading."

As many have noted recently, if Bush loses, the war will be blamed and the party will feud and fracture over the issue. That's one reason a Bush victory



George W. Bush

is so important for McCain and Giuliani. To offset their heresies on several conservative issues, the two men have defined themselves as staunch defenders of Bush's decision to go to war and his approach to foreign policy generally. But, if he loses, they risk being unacceptable to conservatives not just on domestic policy, but on foreign policy as well.

HUMOR LESS

We understand that self-deprecation can be a useful political tactic for elected officials. Bush's jokes about himself have always been incredibly disarming, for instance. But we were shocked to see that the conceit of Barbara and Jenna Bush's speech Tuesday night at the GOP convention was that they are, well, dumb. They joked about not knowing who the White House staff was. They laughed about their reputation for being—just like dad—young and irresponsible, and they awkwardly made an off-color reference to "Sex and the City." In the hall, you could almost hear the delegates collectively cringe as the jokes fell flat.

When self-deprecation works, it's because the person using it has developed some level of credibility that cuts against his or her caricature. But, if the only thing people have heard about you is that you are a hard-partying, spoiled, not-so-bright rich kid, well, wouldn't it be more useful to tell them a different story about yourself, instead of reveling in your immaturity and ditziness? We have no idea whether the popular caricature of the Bush twins is accurate, but they certainly did nothing to dispel it.

FLIP-FLOPPER

Giuliani boosters—yes, they already exist—are crowing over the ways in which Monday night's speech laid the groundwork for a 2008 bid. Most importantly, they point to a line that he inserted in the middle of his attack on Kerry: "Yes, people in public office at times do change their minds—I've done that—or they realize they are wrong or circumstances change." The theory goes, he will be invoking this line plenty in the next couple of years to justify his "reconsideration" of various domestic issues. Most importantly, he'll need to change his position on guns. "Come on, if he weren't the mayor of New York, he'd never have this position," says one booster. It is also possible to imagine Giuliani describing himself as experiencing a spiritual rebirth, a return to his days as an aspiring prelate—a narrative that would allow him to move into the pro-life camp. But gay marriage is another story. Given his experiences with Judith Nathan and Donna Hanover, it's nearly impossible to imagine him defending the sanctity of the institution of marriage. And, in a way, gay marriage will help him accurately describe himself as experiencing a resurgence of faith: He's praying that the issue will disappear before 2008.

David Cowles

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SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT

ONE NIGHT THIS WEEK, TNR WOUND up watching the convention with a group of Deep South Republican delegates. We won't identify these people because it was a casual setting (a hotel bar), they seemed to assume they were off the record, and, more important, we found them pretty likeable and don't want to get them in trouble. What struck us was how liberal they were, given their state of origin. Take the gregarious 60-ish trial lawyer whom we'll call Walter. Though he spoke with a thick drawl and had just come from dinner with an extremely conservative GOP senator friend, Walter described himself as a Rockefeller Republican appalled by the religious right's influence within the party. He also called the invasion of Iraq "the dumbest thing we ever could have done."

But, while he agrees with John Kerry on most issues, Walter seems to find Kerry an untrustworthy panderer. A veteran himself, Walter fixated on the fact that Kerry brought a video camera to Vietnam and said he resents Kerry's emphasis on his war record. And he argued that Bush's evasion of the draft and heavy drinking earlier in life were a testament to the fact that, unlike Kerry, Bush "hasn't been running for president since he was twenty-one." Walter was a John McCain supporter in 2000, and McCain's speech brought him to his feet. McCain helped Walter feel that it was OK to be enthusiastic about the convention—a fine reminder of the Arizona senator's emotional power.

After the night's speeches, someone raised the question of which Republican would be the heir apparent to the GOP nomination in 2008. The fast consensus was McCain or Giuliani. But, someone insisted, "McCain would never get the nomination. There's too much resentment toward him in the party." What about Giuliani? "It would be tough," because of his liberal social positions. "But he might be able to make up for it. That was a pretty incredible speech."

BORDER PATROL

COLORADO REPRESENTATIVE TOM Tancredo, the chairman of Congress's Immigration Reform Caucus, favors arresting and deporting all illegal aliens, using the military to patrol the Mexican border, and curbing legal immigration as well. Not surprisingly, Tancredo had hoped that this year's Republican platform would include some of his immigration reform ideas. But, when the platform committee turned down his proposals, Tancredo decided his only hope of having a strong immigration reform plank in the GOP platform was a floor fight at the convention.

There are two ways to bring a matter to the floor: One is to convince six state delegations to support a motion for a floor debate—a virtual impossibility, Tancredo realized; the other is to get 19 members of the platform committee to support bringing a matter to the floor. This latter route seemed doable, save one problem: The congressman couldn't find out who, exactly, was on the platform committee. With the kind of discipline and secrecy that has come to be expected from the Bush White House, the Republican National Committee, citing security concerns, refused to divulge the identities of the handpicked delegates on the platform committee—even, in some cases, to other committee members.

So, Tancredo had to get creative: He went on seven talk-radio shows late last week to plead with listeners to call him if they knew of any platform committee members. By the time he arrived in New York on Sunday night, Tancredo had the names of four of them. Of course, as he conceded to TNR in an interview, "I think we know who four of them are, but I can't even tell you if they're on our side." Then, before Tancredo could identify any others to lobby for a floor debate, the convention delegates ratified the GOP platform Monday morning. So, with the immigration fight over, what did he plan to do for the rest of the week? "Party and go home," Tancredo said. "And I'm going to go home early. I don't think we'll stay for the whole thing."

TRUTH OUT

THE BUSH CAMPAIGN'S STRATEGY IN responding to Swift Boat Veterans for Truth (SBVT) ads has generally been to change the subject to 527s. But this strategy of diversion avoids the issue at hand in more ways than most realize.

Republicans seem deeply confused about just what it is they intend to do about the so-called "shadowy 527s." Last week, both the president and his spokesman announced that their plan was to outlaw these groups completely. First, White House spokesman Scott McClellan briefed the press about Bush's plan to team up with Senator John McCain, who co-authored the campaign reform law under which the 527s came into being, to take on the groups. McClellan told reporters on Thursday, "The president ... called Senator McCain this morning. And the president said he wanted to work together to *pursue court action to shut down all the ads and activity by these shadowy 527 groups* [emphasis added]." That same day, in an interview with *The New York Times*, Bush was again unequivocal. "I think these [527s] ought to be outlawed. I thought they ought to be outlawed a year ago, when I—whenever I signed the bill. I think they're bad for the system." Bush added, "Let's get rid of them all."

Reporters have consistently repeated that the president and the Bush campaign want to outlaw all 527s and thus prevent groups like SBVT from running the kinds of ads that set off this debate. But Bush and McClellan appear to be completely uninformed about the lawsuit the Bush campaign is pursuing. That suit isn't attempting to ban 527s, which would clearly be unconstitutional. Rather, it seeks to force the groups to register as political action committees and thus be confined to using hard money. But making SBVT register as a political action committee would do nothing to prevent it from continuing to run the same ads. In fact, the 527 about which Republicans say they are so incensed, *MoveOn.org*, has been using hard money to finance its campaign ads for several months. Sure, someone like GOP donor Bob Perry would not be able to write SBVT a big check, but the Swiftees have taught us that you don't need to spend much money on ads to inject their content into the media's bloodstream.

At a lunch for reporters Sunday in New York, we asked Ed Gillespie whether SBVT—the group that the president says his plan would "outlaw"—would still be able to run the same ads it's running now if the Bush campaign's lawsuit were successful. His answer? Yes.

PARALLEL UNIVERSE

"WE REALLY MISS YOUR SPONtaneity" —An adoring fan to former White House spokesman Ari Fleischer as he was mobbed on Monday by Republican delegates at the New Yorker Hotel ■

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Hagel's non-campaign for 2008.

Press the Flesh

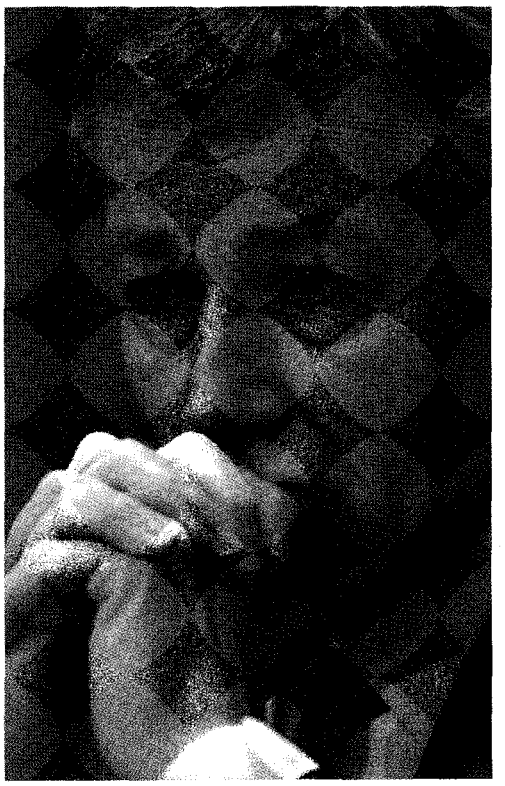
BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY begins here, in a grim Sheraton Hotel reception room with a faded carpet below, harsh fluorescent lights above, and subtext all around. It's 8:30 a.m., and Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska is standing at a lectern before the Iowa delegation to the Republican National Convention, pretending not to be doing what he's doing. Hagel, a second-term senator and former telecom executive, is looking sharp in a crisp blue suit as he ruminates on national politics for the 100 or so assembled delegates. This is ostensibly a casual drop-by, a chance to say hello to some fellow Republicans—and, indeed, to an outside observer that's just how it might appear. But, from the throng of fascinated reporters bunched in the back of the room, it's clear there's something more going on.

A couple of weeks ago, Hagel let slip to a Nebraska reporter that he was mulling a run for the White House in 2008. It was a subtle suggestion, couched as just one of many future options (leaving politics, running for reelection). But it was also a clever one: a well-timed signal to the thousands of reporters here in New York, who are desperate for dramatic subplots to a hyperscripted convention, that Hagel would offer a worthy diversion.

Some White House aspirants have it easy. If you're Rudy Giuliani or John McCain, a prime-time convention speech is all it takes to vault you to the top of everyone's list of future White House contenders. But, for a second-tier Republican like Hagel who doesn't have built-in star power, the task is harder. You need to broadcast your intentions clearly enough that people understand your interest in the presidency. But the unwritten rules of political conduct demand a certain coyness. In New York this week, Hagel was a case study in the bizarre ritual of becoming a "mentioned" presidential candidate.



Chuck Hagel hopes you'll realize that he wants to be president.

TOM WILLIAMS/ROLL CALL PHOTOS/NEWSCOM

AND SO HERE is Hagel speaking to the Iowans, whose caucuses will be the first real test of the 2008 nomination fight. "Being the shameless politician that I am," he says, Hagel mentions that he has several relatives in Iowa and extols the virtues of ethanol. He issues platitudinous calls for entitlement reform and more civility in politics, and engages in such banal pol-speak as "that's dynamic, that's the world, that's change." And he makes what has become his signature argument back on Capitol Hill these days: that America needs to conduct a more multilateral foreign policy. "We will not win any war against the terrorists—the radical fundamentalists—alone," Hagel explains to the crowd.

After speaking for a few minutes, Hagel bolts from the room without bothering to work the crowd. A pack of reporters chases him—some literally run down the hall after him, holding their tape recorders in the air. Another ritual unfolds as Hagel walks for a few feet, feigning disinterest in all the attention, then comes to a halt and takes ten minutes of questions. He demurs when asked about his presidential intentions, insisting he's focused on getting George W. Bush reelected. But then he lets slip that "I've been to New Hampshire five times in the past four years." By the time his aides hustle him off, Hagel has spent more time talking with reporters than schmoozing Iowa delegates. And that, of course, is the point. When it comes to drumming up buzz for your presidential dreams at a party convention, it's not actual primary voters you need to impress—it's the press. Hagel's New York schedule included sit-downs with editors from *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, and *National Review*. And by midweek, his media-first strategy was yielding demonstrable benefits: Hagel was written up in several stories about 2008 contenders, from *The New York Times* to the *Chicago Tribune* to the *Los Angeles Times* to, well, THE NEW REPUBLIC.

Back among the Iowa delegation, however, there was far less excitement with Hagel's performance. After his speech, I caught up with Leon Mosley, the co-chairman of the Iowa Republican Party. He is an unlikely character for the role of Midwestern Republican official: a hulking black man of at least six-foot-three with several metal teeth and a white cowboy hat. (Imagine an African American version of the James Bond villain Jaws.) While Hagel's call for multilateralism played well in the national media—particularly because it is a challenge to Bush administra-

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tion orthodoxy—it hardly impressed the formidable Mosley. "Let me tell you something," he explains to me. "I don't get on my knees and beg for help. When it comes to [terrorists] killing our people, I don't need no help." Did Mosley have a higher opinion of Hagel's positions on so-called values issues? "Values?" he snaps. "I don't know anything about his values." But at this point, as far as Hagel is concerned, he doesn't have to. Mosley and the rest of the Iowa delegates were simply scenery in a piece of political theater played almost entirely for the benefit of journalists.

OTHER FUTURE WHITE House aspirants put a little more effort into wooing influential delegates. George Pataki and Mitt Romney gave long and well-crafted speeches to the New Hampshire and Iowa delegations, respectively. In a speech to the Granite Staters, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, who usually derides the liberal Northeast, makes multiple mentions of the fact that he spent more than a decade living in Boston as a medical resident; Frist also conspicuously sported a lapel pin that read, NEW HAMPSHIRE: A PROVEN PRIMARY TRADITION.

Based on the concerns of Iowa's delegates, at least, all of these candidates might do well to sport WWJD bracelets. After Hagel spoke, Mosley took the lectern to remind his delegates "what's paramount in our life: *God*," a line that drew roaring applause. He added that GOP stands for "God's Official Party." And, when Romney took questions from the Iowans, the first thing he was asked was whether he would be able to pass a gay-marriage ban in Massachusetts. The second delegate he called on had no question: He just wanted to thank Romney "for your stand on the marriage amendment."

Hagel, in contrast, never even bothered with such back-and-forths. Later the same day, it's a similar scene—a hotel ballroom filled with delegates, this time from the all-important primary state of New Hampshire. New Hampshire's GOP delegation is smaller than Iowa's, so now the ratio of reporters to delegates in the room approaches one-to-one. And, this time, the delegates barely seem interested as Hagel reprises his speech from the morning. His brief remarks are almost drowned out by conversation from the back of the room. Hagel finishes after less than ten minutes and steps immediately into another throng of reporters. Why are you here? a scribe asks. Are you running for president? "I know there's always indications anytime you drive through or set foot in Iowa or New Hampshire," Hagel explains. But at the moment, he says, he has no plans. Yet, when someone suggests that senators like John Kerry—and Hagel himself—historically have trouble winning the presidency, Hagel is ready with a convenient response about how today's dangerous world favors members of Congress steeped in foreign policy. After the reporters put away their notebooks, Hagel shakes one or two hands, and then he's gone. Half the delegates in the room seem not to have heard a thing he said. But it doesn't matter. His work here is done. ■

The GOP's strange new friend.

Sign Language

BY JASON ZENGERLE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

'HELLO HAFEZ! HOW'RE you doin'?!" It's Tuesday morning at the Republican convention and Tucker Eskew—a blow-dried, Southern-fried Bush-Cheney campaign official—has rolled into Al Jazeera's Madison Square Garden sky suite for an interview with the Arab satellite network's Washington bureau chief, Hafez Al Mirazi. "What are we doing today?" Eskew inquires, as a young Al Jazeera technician fits him with an earpiece so he can receive a simultaneous English translation of the questions Al Mirazi will be asking him in Arabic. "What do you want to talk about?"

Pretty standard stuff, it turns out. Once Eskew is wired up and sitting next to Al Mirazi, the Al Jazeera anchor asks him why the Republicans are holding their convention in a liberal enclave like New York, which gives Eskew a chance to sing the praises of this "great international city" before tarring Democrats with the observation that "many of the people outside the hall protesting are philosophically the same as the people who were inside the convention hall in Boston: liberals [and] those who really have a lot of anger and hatred toward President Bush." Al Mirazi wants to know what Bush meant when he said just before the convention that the war on terrorism wasn't winnable, prompting Eskew to recite the new GOP talking points that the war on terrorism isn't "the kind of war that ends in a peace treaty. ... And that's what the president meant." Finally, Al Mirazi asks Eskew about the absence of two prominent black Republicans from the convention, Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell. "Secretary Powell and national security adviser Rice are not here. They're part of what we call a war Cabinet," Eskew explains. "But I've heard very strong words from both of them about how they are welcome as top-flight, top-of-the-list advisers to this president." Bush, Eskew adds, "is helping lead our party back to a tradition that, in some respects, goes all the way back to Abraham Lincoln—of promoting ... freedom for those less fortunate and those who have been discriminated against in the past." And, with that, the interview is over and Eskew is out the door.

Eskew's Al Jazeera appearance is telling in two respects. First, there's its content. While the Bush administration may denounce the Arab satellite network's coverage of the war in Iraq—Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has gone so far as to call Al Jazeera "a mouthpiece for Al Qaeda and a vehicle of anti-American propaganda"—Al Jazeera's coverage of American politics is not all that different from

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CNN's or MSNBC's. Save for a tighter focus on issues of concern to Arab Americans—like the presidential candidates' views on Israel and its treatment of the Palestinians—Al Jazeera, as it did in its interview with Eskew, mostly concentrates on the day-to-day mechanics of the presidential campaign, eliciting the same sound bites you hear on American 24-hour cable news channels.

Second, there's the fact that a top Republican campaign official agreed to be interviewed by Al Jazeera at all. In sharp contrast to the Bush administration's generally antagonistic relationship with Al Jazeera, the Bush campaign has bent over backward this week to treat the network the same as (and sometimes even better than) any other cable news organization covering the convention. That has meant allowing Al Jazeera to hang its sign outside its skybox—something the Democrats famously didn't allow the network to do at their convention in Boston last month. It's also meant designating a press liaison to help Al Jazeera line up prominent party officials—including Eskew and California Representative David Dreier—to speak with its reporters (and its 40 million viewers in the Arab world and one million Arab American viewers in the United States) throughout the week, something the Democrats also failed to do in Boston. Eskew claims all the attention stems from the Bush campaign's devotion to public diplomacy. But that's hard to believe, given that the GOP has closed the foreign press center traditionally reserved for international journalists. In reality, the Bushies are love-bombing Al Jazeera for one overriding reason: The contrast makes the Democrats look bad.

THE COLD SHOULDER the Democrats gave Al Jazeera in Boston last month was prompted, most probably, by Democratic fears that, if they treated Al Jazeera well, Republicans would attack them for it. Now, in an ironic twist, Republicans are badmouthing the Democrats for treating Al Jazeera poorly. "The Democrats are the ones who are supposed to be more tolerant and more open," Eskew tells me. "So we like taking advantage of their mistake of looking closed-off."

And, if Al Jazeera is being taken advantage of in the process—serving as a small pawn in this larger presidential chess game—the network doesn't seem to mind. "I don't want to question the Republicans' motivations," says Al Mirazi, "but, whatever positive things come out of it for them, good for them, they did the right thing." For Al Jazeera's viewers, he explains, "It's very important for them to see that we are hanging our sign." Indeed, as Al Mirazi continues to talk about how Al Jazeera was treated by the Democrats, he sounds as if he's speaking from GOP talking points. "What happened in Boston was another sign of the problem with the Democratic nominee," he says. "If you can't stand on principles, and you're unable to take the heat on Al Jazeera hanging its sign, how are you going to have the moral spine to stand up on other difficult decisions? The sign issue was a very clear case of flip-flopping: They said we could hang it, and then they said we couldn't."

Such editorializing from Al Mirazi is rare—and mostly done off air. On air, the 46-year-old Egyptian-born journalist, who has covered American presidential elections since 1984, is a study in objectivity. The partisan sniping at the convention is left to the network's political commentators—Arab American versions of the pundits you see on every other network. Al Jazeera's Republican analyst is Randa Fahmy Hudome, a Washington lobbyist who, until last year, served as Bush's associate deputy secretary of energy. The Democratic analyst is Abed Awad, a New Jersey lawyer who chairs that state's Arab American Democratic Caucus. Al Jazeera hired Hudome and Awad earlier this year to appear with Al Mirazi on the network's weekly hourlong show devoted to the American presidential election; during Al Jazeera's 13 hours of Republican convention coverage, however, the two are on practically every day. They are there, an Al Jazeera employee tells me, "to give our viewers an insider's view of American politics."

And they do speak like insiders—or at least like the other purported insiders on all the other cable news channels. On Tuesday afternoon, Awad, who was born in the United States but raised in Ramallah and who speaks fluent Arabic, went on Al Jazeera to make anti-Bush points familiar to any viewer of American cable news. He discounts the "bump" (or, as he calls it in Arabic, *taqaddum*) that Bush is experiencing in the polls as the result of the "spotlight of the convention and the media coverage." What's more, Awad argues that the bump will be short-lived because, despite the high-profile convention roles given to moderates like Rudy Giuliani and John McCain, "that's not really the truth behind the Republican Party, where it's right-wing conservative neocons who have control of the Republican agenda. And that agenda does not attract the independents and the undecideds."

Appearing right after Awad, Hudome makes the case for Bush in a slightly tailored, but still extremely familiar, fashion. Speaking in English ("I know a little bit of Arabic," she tells me, "but not enough for me to say, 'John Kerry's war record in Vietnam.' "), Hudome notes that the GOP "platform calls for the traditional union of marriage between a husband and wife" and argues that this is one of the "social issues that appeal to the Arab American community, [because], by and large, Arab Americans socially are conservative." She also points out that the Republican platform "recognizes the two-state solution ... [and] devotes quite a bit of time to the idea of a Palestinian state. ... The bottom line," she adds, "is the Democrats don't provide much for the Arab American community, and I don't think that's the way they're going to go."

Indeed, the afternoon's only stereotypically Al Jazeera moment comes courtesy of Ralph Nader, who—inside Madison Square Garden to do a previously scheduled interview with CNN—makes a surprise appearance in Al Jazeera's skybox, where he proceeds to denounce Israel's "military regime that thinks there's a military solution to the Palestinian conflict." Kerry and Bush, Nader tells Al Jazeera

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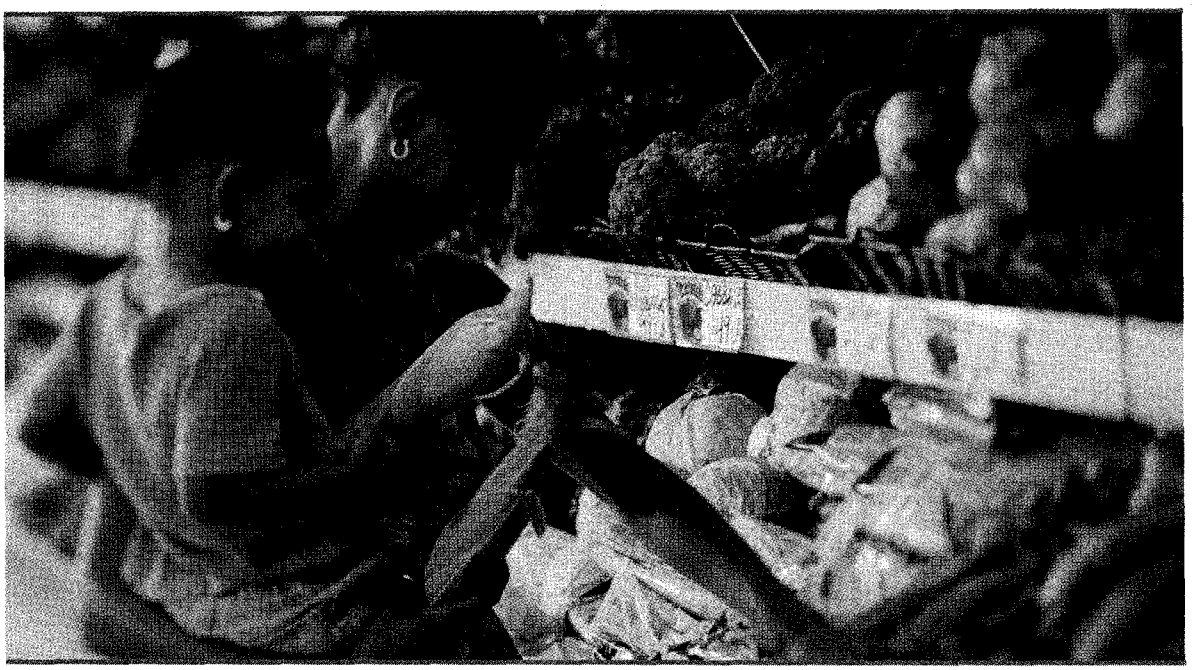

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viewers, are "puppets to the Israeli military government."

Of course, this being Al Jazeera, Nader isn't the only person to strike a discordant note. On Monday afternoon in the Al Jazeera sky suite, Al Mirazi is interviewing George Salem, an Arab American delegate from Virginia who served as the solicitor of labor in the Reagan administration. Salem is giving his insider's take on the race—"The latest polls show Bush ahead in the targeted states of Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania," he says. "We're just seeing the beginning of the Bush uptick"—while, down below on the convention stage, a country musician is rehearsing a song he'll be performing that evening. But, whenever the musician takes a break from his sound check, another voice rises up from the convention floor. "Al Jazeera sucks!" a man is yelling in the direction of the network's skybox, readily identifiable because of its prominent sign. "Al Jazeera sucks!" Must be a Democrat. ■

Bush annoys smart conservatives.

The Grumblers

BY FRANKLIN FOER

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

ON THE FIRST morning of convention week, a raft of high-roller donors and the politicians who take their money congregated at a fusty Gilded Age club in Midtown. In contrast to much of the week's frivolity and agitprop, the purpose of this gathering was substantive discussion: a seminar on the Bush economy hosted by the Club for Growth, a group that funds the candidates most devoted to the gospel of conservative economics. Because the Club fielded a panel of writers venerated by the right—Paul Gigot, the editor of the *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page; Larry Kudlow, a Reagan administration official turned cable talk-show host; and Arthur Laffer, the academic who developed much of supply-side doctrine—the audience began the morning in an enthusiastic mood, ready to clap and yelp.

Supply-siders are known for their Pollyannaish predictions about the power of tax cuts. And, for most of the morning, the panelists played to type, waxing lyrical about the beauty of Bush's rate-slashing spree. But, as the session ground to a close, it took an unexpectedly dour turn. A senior from Fordham University wearing an untucked white shirt stood to challenge the panel. "Bush spends like Carter and panders like Clinton. It feels like we've had the third term of a Clinton presidency," he said, decrying the dramatic growth of government on the president's watch. "Is there any betrayal that we wouldn't support?" With so many party loyalists in the room, you might have expected such comments to elicit boos. Instead, there was scattered applause. One man shouted, "Yes!" Stephen Moore, the president of the Club for Growth and the morning's moderator, solemnly turned to the speakers. "Why don't we address this? It's a serious question."

It wasn't just a stray moment of discontent. For all the encomiums GOP speakers have been showering on George W. Bush from the podium at Madison Square Garden, conservatives—especially conservative intellectuals—have a far less rosy view of the president. Last month, Andrew Ferguson wrote in *The Weekly Standard*, "[W]e'll let slip a thinly disguised secret—Republicans are supporting a candidate that relatively few of them find personally or politically appealing." Or, as conservative columnist Bruce Bartlett told me, "People are careful about how they say it and to who they say it, but, if you're together with more than a couple of conservatives, the issue of would we be better or worse off with Kerry comes up—and it's seriously discussed."

In part, this unhappiness reflects the temperament of ideological true believers, whose expectations few politicians can meet. (The left was similarly, if not as vehemently, exasperated by Clinton's New Democrat agenda during his first term.) And, in the end, their griping won't lead many conservatives to jump ship. Even among the president's loudest critics, frustration with Bush is far exceeded by fear and loathing of Kerry. But the breadth of the unhappiness with Bush is nonetheless striking. Although it began on conservatism's isolationist fringe, it has moved to the movement's mainstream and now emanates from every segment of the right's coalition, from neoconservatives to libertarians, with the exception of social conservatives (see Clay Risen, "Tanked," page 20). And conservative discontent isn't just the result of policy disagreements with Bush. It is based on a stylistic and personal critique of the president that can sound a lot like the critique leveled by the left.

CONSERVATIVE CRITICISM OF Bush falls into several categories, the most significant of which concerns the president's economic policies. "There's a sense that he is not a real Ronald Reagan anti-government conservative," says Moore, who, with Bartlett, is one of Bush's loudest economic critics. Granted, when conservatives signed up for Bush's 2000 campaign and its "compassionate" agenda, they understood that their man wasn't going to eviscerate the welfare state. (After the Newt Gingrich debacle, most Republicans conceded that they couldn't sell raw anti-statist ideology in a national election.) But they didn't expect so many flat-out betrayals: tariffs on steel and lumber, federal regulations on corporate accounting, the creation of a new Cabinet department (Homeland Security) and no elimination of existing ones, and a failure to veto any of Congress's deficit-ballooning spending bills. Last year, *National Review*'s Ramesh Ponnuru wrote, "More people are working for the federal government than at any point since the end of the Cold War. Spending has been growing

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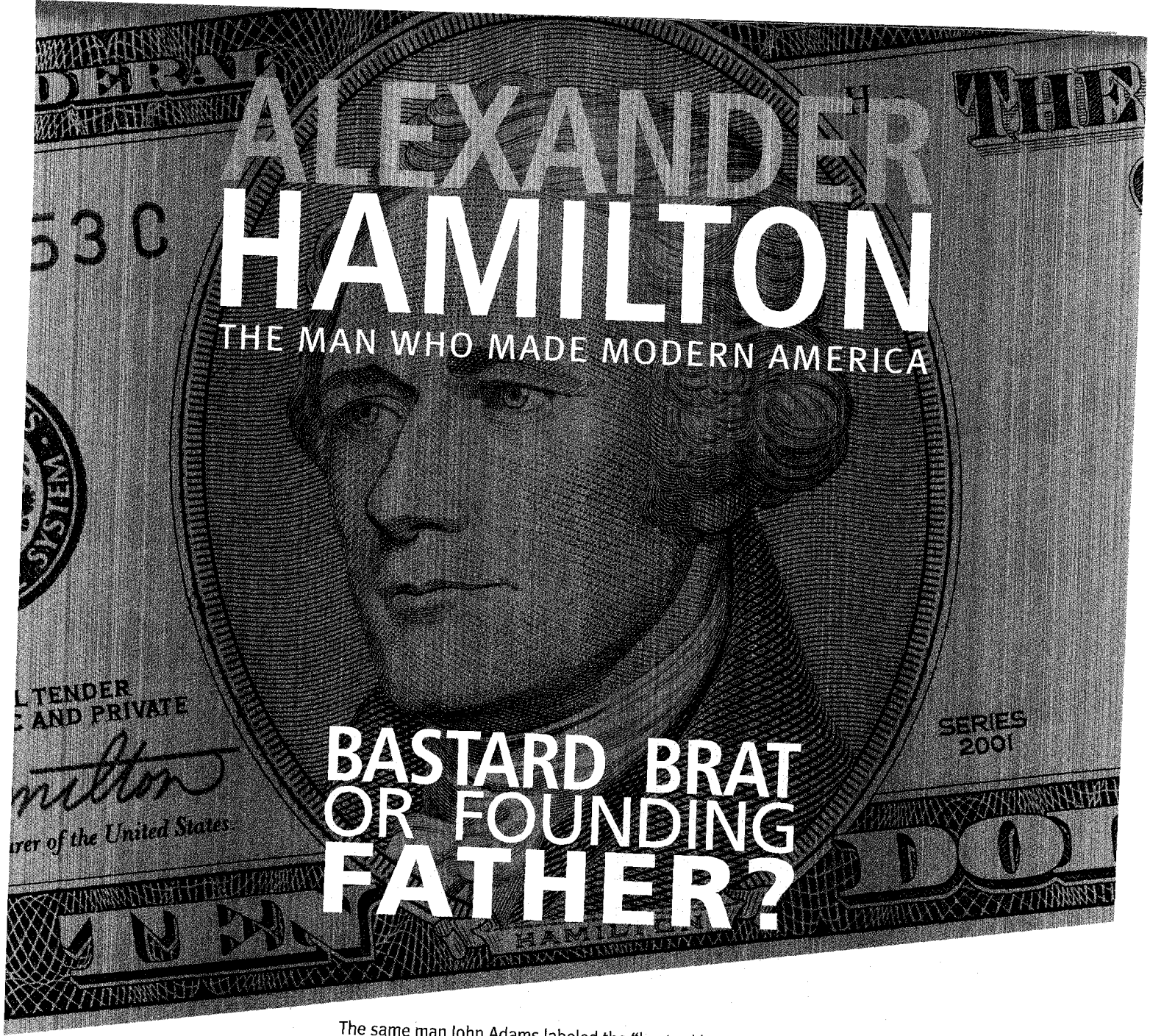

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faster than it did under Clinton." At the convention, I kept hearing economic conservatives denouncing a line in the party platform extolling a boost in education spending. "Weren't we supposed to be against that?" kvetched one.

A second set of complaints has to do with the war. Some conservatives, such as Pat Buchanan and his fellow isolationists at *The American Conservative*, opposed it from the start. Their arguments, however, never gained much traction in the conservative mainstream. With the administration's failure to extinguish the Iraqi insurgency, however, that has begun to change. A growing camp, including pundits George F. Will and Tucker Carlson, have joined the antiwar right. Their conversion can be traced to the failure to find weapons of mass destruction. But they have also bluntly expressed qualms about the administration's goal of planting democracy in the Middle East, a goal they say disregards conservatism's traditional skepticism about government's ability to transform culture. Although you wouldn't know it from the op-ed pages, frustration with the war has spread far and wide within the movement. Paul Weyrich, the head of the Free Congress Foundation, told me, "The one message that rings true that Kerry has been pushing is when he says that we could not have been a better recruiting tool for Al Qaeda. I've had that repeated to me over and over again, not by people who are Kerry supporters by any means. ... Phyllis Schlafly [one of the founders of the modern right] surprised me. I was talking to her casually, and she went into a virtual diatribe against the neoconservatives. 'Why do we have these people controlling our foreign policy? Bush has strayed from what he promised.' ... I was shocked by the vehemence by which she expressed this."

The frustration with Bush doesn't just come from a growing antiwar right. It comes from the pro-war right, too. Given America's evident difficulties in Iraq, boosters of the war can either fundamentally reconsider the principles that led them to predict relatively painless success, or they can blame the administration's ham-fisted postwar policy. Many have chosen the latter. Writing in the *Los Angeles Times* in June, the Council on Foreign Relations's Max Boot wrote, "When President Bush's foreign policy players came into office, the widespread assumption was that they would be cautious but competent. Sort of like the last Bush administration. Instead they've been great at enunciating bold policies—such as preempting terrorism—and terrible at executing them." The most extreme example of this discontent with the administration's postwar execution is Harvard historian Niall Ferguson. After championing the virtues of invasion and empire, he wrote an op-ed last week in *The Wall Street Journal* suggesting conservatives would be better off with a Kerry victory.

IN RECENT MONTHS, these complaints have metastasized into an extremely dim view of Bush the man and his management style. Conservative critics accuse him of harboring an unhealthy obsession with electoral considerations. Moore says, "Bush and [Karl] Rove are very political. Bush throws a big sop to the left and then does something for the right. They'd sell out to the left on education and then play hardball on the tax bill." And what makes Bush's concessions to the left even more irksome is that they have yielded so few political benefits. None of his so-called "big-government" initiatives—from campaign finance reform to the prescription-drug benefit to No Child Left Behind—have significantly tilted poll numbers in the Republican direction. Ponnuru wrote in *National Review* last spring, "As they survey the public reaction, many congressmen who voted for the education and Medicare bills are regretting their votes. Nobody who voted against them regrets his. The reforms have lost Bush conservative support without gaining him compensatory support from the center."

Malcontents also complain that the ruthlessness Bush displays toward his political foes on the left extends to his treatment of conservatives who voice dissent, echoing the image presented by Ron Suskind in his book *The Price of Loyalty*. "Someone who says something off-message, they're blackballed. It's like high school," says Bartlett, who admits that he has suffered this fate himself. In private, conservative critics complain about the silencing of Greg Mankiw, the chairman of the president's Council of Economic Advisers, following his principled defense of outsourcing. And, in gory detail, they relive the firing of Lawrence Lindsey, the president's top economic adviser, after he had the temerity to provide an honest, if impolitic, estimate of Iraq war costs.

And, for all the representatives Rove sends to the weekly conservative meetings held by Grover Norquist and Paul Weyrich, at which the movement coordinates strategy, the president doesn't schmooze conservative intellectuals and leaders nearly as skillfully as Reagan did. Indeed, though Reagan by no means gave conservatives everything they wanted—social conservatives, for instance, left his administration pretty much empty-handed—he maintained the right's support by throwing it rhetorical bones and publicly identifying himself with its leaders. What's more, Reagan could always blame the Democratic-controlled Congress for stymieing his conservative agenda. Bush can't fall back on this excuse, nor does he have Reagan's personal touch. Conservatives say he doesn't write them congratulatory notes for supportive op-eds, and his top aides rarely consult them. One of Bush's defenders says, "He's done less entertaining in the White House and done more traveling in the country than any president since the war. If some conservatives have opposed Bush ... well, they have never been to dinner at the White House."

To an extent, conservatives have only themselves to blame for their disappointment. There's a tendency within the movement to mythologize its leaders. Reagan, of course, benefited from this hero-worship more than anyone. One Bush critic told me, in a bout of self-flagellation, "Conservatives don't want a transactional relationship with their leaders. They want to be inspired by them, and this leads to romanticism and an abandonment of clear-headed analysis." Even before September 11, conservatives

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mounted Bush on the same pedestal as Reagan. After the terrorist attacks, his standing rose even higher, with books like David Frum's *The Right Man* and John Podhoretz's *Bush Country* making the case for his historic importance. It would be difficult for nearly any politician to fulfill such impossibly high expectations.

So what's the practical effect of this discontent? It's by no means transcendent or all-consuming. Only a few conservatives, like Niall Ferguson and Carlson, have suggested they won't vote for Bush. Still, frustration with Bush has shaped the campaign. Unable to muster enthusiasm for their man, conservatives have justified their continued support for the president by resorting to passionate Kerry-hating. At the Club for Growth confab, the mere mention of Swift Boat Veterans for Truth garnered resounding cheers and applause. Delegates walked around Madison Square Garden with Purple Heart Band-Aids on their cheeks, mocking Kerry's war injuries. But there's no document more telling than *National Review*'s "Republican Convention Special." Instead of defending the president, the magazine used the occasion to put out its "All-Kerry Issue." For ten solid pieces, writers took turns hammering the Democratic nominee. Apparently, when you have nothing nice to say about your own guy, it's best to say nothing at all. ■

Why Bush loves Orthodox Jews.

Black Hat Trick

BY NOAM SCHEIBER

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

JOHN KERRY MAY or may not know what *agita* is. (It's an Italian word for indigestion appropriated by American Jews of my grandparents' generation.) But Neal Turk could give it to him. Turk is the head of Beth Israel, an Orthodox Jewish congregation of some 250 families in Miami Beach. He's visiting New York this week for two reasons. First, to drop in on his son at Yeshiva University in New York City; and second, to attend a Bush-Cheney campaign briefing for Orthodox Jews. When I approach Turk after the event, he explains that much of his congregation supported Al Gore and Joe Lieberman in 2000. Lieberman even attended services at his synagogue during the campaign. But Turk says most members are voting Republican this time around. "It's not a hard decision at all," he says. "I think that President Bush has so convinced us all of his support for Israel."

One shouldn't overstate the significance of people like Turk. "Jews remain one of most loyal constituencies," says one Kerry adviser. "It makes many uncomfortable—if not downright scared—to know that this administration is so ideologically driven on so many issues." He's right. A recent poll of Jewish Americans found that 75 percent prefer Kerry, pretty much the same number that favored Gore. Bush campaign officials protest that the poll was partisan—it was sponsored by a Democratic organization—and skewed because it was conducted during the Democratic convention. But even strategists close to the administration concede it's unlikely Bush will perform more than five or ten points better than the poll indicates. "Seventy to seventy-five percent of the Jewish vote is off the table to Bush," admits one.

The issue, these strategists claim, is not whether Bush wins 30 percent of the national Jewish vote. It's whether he picks off five or ten percentage points in key swing states like Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania—states where Jews tilted strongly toward Gore and Lieberman in 2000 and where a few thousand votes could mean the difference between a second term and a one-way ticket to Crawford. The Bush campaign—run by Ken Mehlman, who grew up in a kosher household—is acutely aware of this. And the Jewish outreach shows it: It is vastly more sophisticated than anything the Republicans attempted in 2000 or 1996—and in some ways more sophisticated than anything the Democrats are doing this year. "My conversations with [the Kerry people] are much more in broad terms, about broad policy issues, broad message," says an official from a large Jewish organization. "The Bush folks have their playbook. They're running plays. They want to know . . . in this city, who do you recommend?" If people like Neal Turk are any indication, those plays may be working.

THE OBVIOUS PLACE for Republicans to troll for Jewish votes is the Orthodox community. Orthodox Jews are more comfortable with Republican positions on abortion and gay marriage than their Conservative, Reform, and unaffiliated Jewish counterparts. They are sympathetic to Republican programs like faith-based initiatives and school choice. (Vouchers could significantly benefit Orthodox Jews, who often send their children to private religious schools.) And they are more hawkish than other Jews on Israel. Their numbers, moreover, aren't trivial. Estimates for South Florida's Orthodox Jewish population exceed 50,000 (out of a state population typically estimated at 750,000 Jews). The Cleveland area boasts several thousand Orthodox Jews; Philadelphia and Detroit have large Orthodox populations of their own. Bush could easily win more than 50 percent of the vote in these communities, says Larry Grossman, co-editor of the *American Jewish Yearbook* at the American Jewish Committee. That would likely be a significant improvement from 2000, when, according to one estimate, 60 percent of Orthodox Jews voted for Gore. This is apparently the motivation behind a trip by Republican Senators Rick Santorum and Norm Coleman (himself a Jew) to the largely Orthodox Borough Park neighborhood of Brooklyn on the second day of the convention. Santorum and Coleman are inside consulting with three prominent rabbis when I arrive at the Joseph Tanen-

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baum Torah Center. It's a private meeting that's closed to the press, so it's unlikely I'll be admitted even if I can find the right room. But it doesn't matter anyway. A scrum of teenage seminary students block the entrance, each dressed in traditional black pants, white shirts, and velvet skullcaps. Their de facto leader, a short, broad-shouldered blonde whom the others refer to as the "student mayor," demands to know what I'm doing here. Saying I'm a journalist is apparently the wrong answer because, before long, I'm in a raging political debate. Actually, "debate" is a stretch. The kids I'm talking to have no idea who Santorum is. But they know what they think of Bush and Kerry. "Bush is a man," the student mayor sums it up for me, whereas Kerry is a liberal. "And religious Jews don't go with liberals."

The political benefit of an event targeted at *haredi*, or ultra-Orthodox, Jews in New York is not immediately obvious. After all, New York is a blue state, and winning every Brooklyn Orthodox vote isn't going to dent the Democratic tally here. But Jeff Ballabon, a 41-year-old Orthodox Jew and Bush Pioneer who helped organize the Brooklyn trip and the earlier briefing, argues that the events will resonate outside New York because *haredim* in different parts of the country are tightly connected. "They all read the same national papers," says Ballabon. "And ninety-five percent of them are published in New York. ... The Orthodox press for many is the primary source of news." The logic applies to non-*haredi*, modern Orthodox Jews as well. At the Bush campaign press briefing earlier in the day, Tevi Troy, an Orthodox Jewish campaign official, emphasizes that the assembled leaders, a mixture of *haredi* and modern Orthodox Jews, are "plugged into other cities"—"you know, people in Detroit, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Cleveland." He encourages them to "talk to your friends in other cities and tell them what the president is about."

With a hawkish evangelical in the White House and no Lieberman on the Democratic ticket, Bush's task when it comes to Orthodox Jews is probably less a matter of changing minds than energizing the vote. Hence the much-hyped appearance at Madison Square Garden Tuesday evening of Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis, a renowned figure in the Orthodox community and perhaps the first person ever to wear a *sheitel* (the wig worn by Orthodox women) on a convention stage.

The true swing voters, by contrast, are those secular and moderately religious Jews for whom Israel and the war on terrorism trump other issues, such as abortion. The Bush campaign believes it can make gains here as well. "The natural inroads are Jews in areas with Republican congressmen," says a Republican strategist. "The work that's going to be done is among the Reform, Conservative, and unaffiliated Jews who identify Israel as one of their top three issues."

The public face of this effort is Virginia Representative Eric Cantor, the chief deputy majority whip in the House of Representatives and the only Jewish Republican in the House. Cantor is a mild-mannered, third-generation Richmonder with a boyish grin and an easy Southern lilt. But, when he takes the microphone at a Sunday brunch at the Plaza Hotel, where American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) members dominate the crowd, his rhetoric verges on the apocalyptic. "The Jewish people have a sometimes painful and tragic history," he says. "It gives us an understanding of the devastation that can be wrought by a savage ideology." At an event the following afternoon, he tells the crowd, "We aren't negotiating with the terrorists, and neither should Israel." Cantor tells me this is a message he's been taking to swing states like Ohio, Florida, and Arizona "several weekends a month."

It's a message the people who showed up at the Plaza are receptive to. Many are secular Jews who were Democrats before September 11. A stocky middle-aged man from Florida who looks like a slightly older version of Al Franken glances conspiratorially over his shoulder as he confides to me, "I think there are a lot of Jewish Democrats, including me, that support the president. ... He understands the difference between good and evil." Some of these people have probably been voting Republican for years and were just too embarrassed to admit it. September 11 and the Bush administration's support of Israel gave them a powerful public rationale. Still, there does appear to be a real shift underway, if only a small one. Jay Stein, chairman of the clothing outlet Stein Mart and previously one of the largest donors to Al Gore, told me, "After the experience of 9/11, in my view, a different criterion had to be placed on who's going to be president. ... If America is not safe, very little else matters. ... All these wonderful democratic values matter less if we're not secure in our own country."

THE UNDERBELLY OF the Bush campaign's pitch to these voters is the idea that, even if John Kerry, who gets a stellar rating from AIPAC, is a reliable supporter of Israel, and even if he says he'd prosecute the war on terrorism aggressively, there are structural forces within the Democratic Party that make a Kerry administration dangerous. At just about every Jewish-themed event I attended this week—and there were multiple events each day—someone has drawn attention to the rise of the antiwar, anti-Israel left within the Democratic Party. Usually, the conversation begins with Michael Moore, who has left a long trail of anti-Israel comments, continues on to *MoveOn.org* and former supporters of Howard Dean, and ends with the observation that, in recent years, it has been the far left of the Democratic Party, not the far right of the Republican Party, that has been AWOL on votes in Congress regarding Israel. "That's going to be a major theme going into the stretch run," says one Republican strategist. "The point is, who do you surround yourself with? ... [With the Kerry] campaign, the focus is on Michael Moore, Jimmy Carter." One Jewish Republican close to the White House, who occasionally serves as a Bush campaign surrogate, told me he makes this pitch explicitly. "Even if Kerry means everything he says about Israel," he tells Jewish audiences, "the question is whether his constituency—today's Democratic Party—

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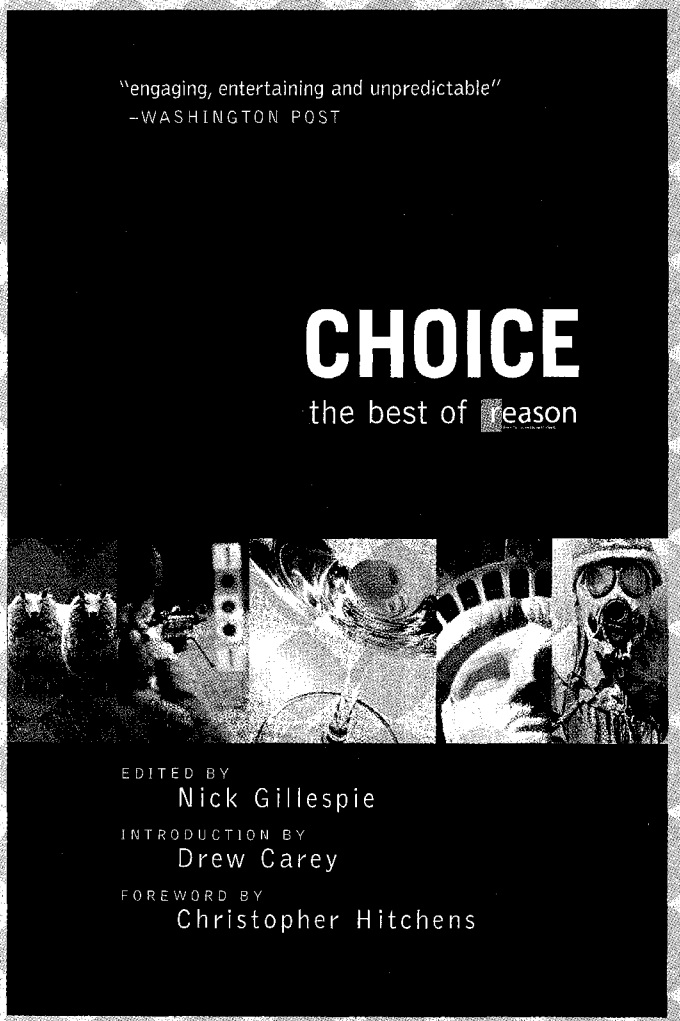

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would really let him go there."

There are signs this strategy is working. A leader of a major Jewish organization told me, "After the Democratic convention, they may well have driven Jews into the Republican camp. ... I was there. I saw the reaction ... to seeing the whole thing revolve around Michael Moore." Others attribute the increasing willingness of young Jews to vote Republican—Republican pollster Frank Luntz has data suggesting that only 60 percent of Jews under 35 vote Democratic—to a reaction against campus anti-Israel and antiwar activism.

Ironically, though, the Bushies may be making their greatest inroads among a group of Jews who aren't within 5,000 miles of Madison Square Garden. Estimates suggest there are about 200,000 American citizens living in Israel, making it the fifth-largest source of American expatriates in the world. Over 100,000 are eligible to vote. Americans in Israel—and Israelis in general—tend to be favorably disposed to Bush thanks to his close relationship with Ariel Sharon. A Tel Aviv University poll conducted in early August found that Israelis prefer Bush to Kerry by a 49–18 margin. So a 527 organization called Republicans Abroad Israel has identified several thousand expats eligible to vote in each of the major swing states (about 25,000 in all) and is frantically trying to register them before a self-imposed deadline arrives in two weeks. Bush may not be playing well in Peoria. But, this year, he might gladly exchange Peoria for Tel Aviv. ■

How Bush lost the libertarians.

Tanked

BY CLAY RISEN

In 1997, Cato Institute President Ed Crane flew to Austin, Texas, to have dinner with George W. Bush. Bush was still governor of Texas, but his star was rising in the national GOP firmament, and Crane wanted to make sure he had the governor's support for the libertarian institute's signature policy idea, Social Security privatization. The meeting, Crane said later, was an unqualified success, with Bush telling Crane, "This is the most important policy issue facing the United States today." Four years later, Bush's 2001 budget speech to Congress strongly emphasized Social Security privatization, leading Cato's Michael Tanner, who oversees the think tank's efforts on the issue, to declare gleefully, "Bush hit all the right notes. ... [He was] on solid ground with this approach." Tanner had even more reason to celebrate when Bush named five Cato scholars and affiliates to the 16-member Commission to Strengthen Social Security. From Cato's shining glass edifice on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, D.C., the Bush era was shaping up as a time of plenty.

Oh, how things can change in three years. These days, Cato is on the outs with the administration. From its deficit spending to its regulatory record to the Iraq war, the Institute charges that the administration has betrayed conservative values, bankrupted the government, expanded federal programs, and made the world less safe. Were it not for the occasional, wistful nod to the Reagan era, Cato's policy papers, TV appearances, and columns could be mistaken for those of the left-wing Economic Policy Institute. In fact, Cato staffers and scholars are so fed up with Bush that many say they will sit out the election—or even vote for John Kerry. "Most people at the Institute have no plans to vote for the president this time," said one member of the Cato policy staff who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "There will be some votes for Kerry inside the Cato Institute this year."

Of course, given that Cato has only a few dozen staff members, Bush doesn't have to worry about losing the think tank's vote this November. To be sure, Bush's nascent "ownership society" agenda, which is said to include renewed efforts at social security privatization, could win back some at Cato (see Jonathan Chait, "Up and Away," page 22). But, judging by the depth of the animosity toward him at the Institute right now, it will take a lot more than a stump speech to do so. Moreover, its antipathy is indicative of a growing belief among the GOP's fiscally conservative constituencies—not just libertarian ideologues, but big-business executives, small-business owners, virtually any voting bloc concerned with fiscal restraint—that Bush has been an abject failure. And, in a close election, that could make a difference.

Though Cato takes pains to portray itself as politically unaligned, its philosophy (unfettered markets, minimal government, balanced budgets) and the careers of many of its senior staffers—Chairman William Niskanen and senior fellow Doug Bandow, among others, held high-ranking posts in the Reagan administration—put it squarely within the Republican camp. While the Institute initially backed Steve Forbes in the 2000 presidential primary—Crane even penned a column alleging that parts of Bush's platform "could have come straight out of the Progressive Policy Institute"—it greeted Bush's win with optimism, not only because of his talk on Social Security but because of his early tax cuts. "We had a brief wave of enthusiasm in the first six months," says one staffer. "He came into office with almost no political capital, and he spent it all on tax cuts. We saw that as a good sign." And, though Cato is traditionally averse to military intervention abroad, it supported Bush's decision to invade Afghanistan.

But, by late 2002, people at the Institute began to sour on Bush. His Social Security commission had done almost nothing since its creation, even as a privatization bill driven by Cato was making its way through the House. In an affront to the "starve the beast" strategy espoused by Washington's more aggressive fiscal conservatives, Bush was cutting taxes while increasing deficit spending, a double sin in Cato's eyes, because he was not only expanding government but doing so

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in a fiscally irresponsible way. Cato scholars watched as a cavalcade of big-ticket legislation crossed the president's desk—No Child Left Behind, the prescription-drug benefit—while the deficit surged to a record high. Niskanen even declared Bush's 2005 budget "a fraud" concocted by "borrow and spend Republicans." Cato scholars never expected a perfect president—after all, they had even parted ways, from time to time, with their demigod, Ronald Reagan—but they were particularly galled to see such policies endorsed by a man who, during the campaign, declared, "My opponent trusts the government. I trust you." "It's certainly the case that Bush is more disappointing, given the way he campaigned against Al Gore," says David Boaz, Cato's executive vice president. And spending was only one of Cato's grievances. Its scholars chafed at what they saw as a new threat to civil liberties in the USA Patriot Act, a violation of the First Amendment in the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform, and a betrayal of the GOP's free-trade ethos in Bush's 2002 steel tariffs. Even on Cato's pet issue, federal regulations (it publishes an entire periodical advocating regulatory rollbacks), Bush has proved disappointing. According to a recent Cato report, Bush—who has supposedly made his mark as an anti-regulatory crusader—has actually overseen an increase in the growth of federal regulations, including a 2 percent increase in the number of new regulations issued in 2003.

But the tipping point was the invasion of Iraq. As early as December 2001, Institute scholars were writing op-eds urging the administration not to go to war against Saddam Hussein; when it did, Cato was one of the first think tanks to warn that the lack of postwar planning would doom the reconstruction effort. In October 2003, several Cato foreign policy experts joined the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy, co-organized by its director of foreign policy studies, Christopher Preble. Today, Cato is unabashed in its calls for an immediate exit from Iraq, a view encapsulated in a March *USA Today* op-ed by Preble titled "WISEST MOVE: LEAVE SOON." The Institute's link to its Iraq Web page reads "EXIT: IRAQ." Indeed, when it comes to the war, Cato sounds like *The Nation*—in a March *Chicago Sun-Times* op-ed, Cato fellow Stanley Kober even called out the administration for not listening to its international critics and failing to retain international support. "The idea of a preemptive war against a sovereign country was a mistake," says Crane. "Things over in Iraq are just a mess. We had Al Qaeda on the run, and that's where ninety percent of efforts should have been directed." Not surprisingly, when the administration went looking for think-tank staffers to help man the Coalition Provisional Authority, it skipped over Cato while heavily mining the Heritage Foundation and other more politically malleable conservative establishments.

These various strands of criticism—on spending, civil liberties, the war—have come together to convince many Cato staffers that the best vote this fall might be for Kerry. For one thing, there is a growing belief at the Institute that the Republicans—not just Bush, but the congressional leadership as well—have sold out traditional small-government conservatives, spending lavishly to woo cultural conservatives and big business; Cato op-eds note that, during Bush's first three years, nondefense discretionary spending has increased 20.8 percent. Since last summer, scholars have chafed against the administration's fiscal profligacy in op-eds with titles like "OVERSPENDING IS NOT FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY," "THE BUSH BETRAYAL," and "WHAT FISCAL DISCIPLINE?" In contrast, New Democrats may not always talk the small-government talk, but Cato staffers note that, under Clinton, the Democrats reined in government spending and deregulated a broad swath of industries. "Perhaps we are being unfair to former President Clinton," wrote Cato fellow Veronique de Rugy for *National Review Online* in 2003, pointing out that Clinton reduced nondefense discretionary spending. At the same time, there is a more philosophical, and more cynical, pro-Kerry argument that has gained credence within the Institute—namely that the best way to limit government spending is to divide the parties' control between the executive and the legislative branches. And, given the GOP's advantage in Congress, the best way to affect such a division is to pull the lever for Kerry. In April, Bandow outlined this view in a widely syndicated column (originally published in *Fortune*), arguing that "the biggest impetus for higher spending is partisan uniformity, not partisan identity." Therefore, he urged his conservative readers, "Vote Democratic."

So far, Cato's criticism hasn't affected its donor base, a veritable who's who of banking, telecom, and media corporations and executives. If anything, its largest donors are enthusiastically behind the Institute. "They love us for sticking to our limited government principles," says Susan Chamberlin, Cato's director of government affairs. That a large number of conservative businesspeople are questioning whether Bush deserves to be reelected is a significant problem for the White House. In June, Cato board member Tucker Andersen announced at a Club for Growth dinner that he would withhold both his vote and his contributions from Bush, adding later, "I would be surprised if more than half the people in the room actually wrote checks for him." Pete Peterson, the august chairman of the investment bank the Blackstone Group and a bellwether for Wall Street conservative views, recently told *The Nation* that "I've been a Republican all my life, but I'm going to wait and see. ... I think there's a considerable group of Republicans who think of themselves as fiscally responsible and are very concerned." Even Fred Smith, the FedEx CEO (and Cato board member) once mentioned as a possible Bush Cabinet officer, has been playing down his ties to Bush while emphasizing his long-running friendship with Kerry; meanwhile, he has donated heavily to Democratic Senator Chris Dodd's reelection campaign.

It might be a smart move. While the Bush administration hasn't gone after Cato for its anti-Bush rhetoric, it's a good bet that Cato scholars won't be appointed to another White House advisory group anytime soon. The think tank might get a friendlier reception if Kerry wins in November. ■

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Bush's schemes to fleece the poor.

Up and Away

BY JONATHAN CHAIT

One of the many, many problems with the Bush administration is that its slogans are crafted by powerful and highly competent wordsmiths and strategists, such as Michael Gerson and Karen Hughes, while its domestic polices are crafted by anonymous nobodies like, uh ... say, who is in charge of domestic policy these days, anyway? Thus, Bush frequently finds himself making eloquent pronouncements whose policy ballast is formulated off-the-cuff and discarded just as easily. Early this year, the White House announced a great civilizational commitment to landing on Mars, apparently without consulting any scientists first. Bush declared, "We will build new ships to carry man forward into the universe, to gain a new foothold on the moon, and to prepare for new journeys to the worlds beyond our own." Or not. Bush failed to mention the proposal in his State of the Union address six days later.

Now that Bush is promising to use his second term to promote an "ownership society," the natural reaction is to lump this new idea in with the "responsibility era," the "compassion agenda," and other pleasant-sounding but mostly empty Bush slogans. In this instance, however, the rhetoric actually refers to some weighty proposals. And, unlike the Mars trip and other schemes, Bush may actually stick with them. Why? Because they share one crucial thing with all the domestic policies he cares about enough to invest real political capital in: they redistribute wealth upward.

Bush has yet to provide many details about his "ownership society," but he has suggested it would have three main elements. The first are Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), a component of last year's Medicare law, which Bush would expand by $25 billion over ten years. HSAs are a way for individuals to buy health insurance. You put money—say, $5,000—into an account and deduct the $5,000 from your income taxes. The money is then used to pay your health care expenses up to a certain level, after which the insurance company pays for everything. If you don't spend the money on health care, you can keep it. Proponents claim these accounts will control costs (by giving patients an incentive to economize on their care) while expanding health insurance. In reality, though, HSAs are likely to do the opposite.

For one thing, as economist Henry Aaron of the Brookings Institution wrote in *Tax Notes* this year, "most medical spending occurs during high-cost episodes in which the total cost of care charged to patients greatly exceeds the limits of any plausible high-deductible plan." Remember, the insurance company would pay for anything above a set level, and, if most spending is above that level, then patients no longer have any incentive to economize. They would, however, have an incentive to control costs under that level. And that's exactly the wrong incentive to give them. One of the major problems with America's health care system is that patients skimp on cheap preventive care and, as a result, end up suffering (and, more to the point, paying) far more later on.

Another problem with HSAs is that they mostly help the affluent. Financing the accounts through a tax deduction means they are worth more to those in higher tax brackets. Take that $5,000 deposit. If you're in the 35 percent income tax bracket, the government would pay for $1,750 of your deposit. If you're in the 10 percent bracket, the government would kick in just $500. If you don't earn enough to pay income taxes, you would get nothing. (The deduction does not count against payroll taxes.) This is extremely unfair—why set up a health care program that gives the greatest benefits to those who earn the most? And that unfairness undermines the program's ability to cover the uninsured, 90 percent of whom are in the 15 percent tax bracket or lower, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. MIT economist Jonathan Gruber has calculated that about 87 percent of HSAs would be purchased by those who already have health insurance. In fact, because the existence of the accounts would encourage some businesses to scale back or drop health insurance for their employees, Gruber estimated that expanding HSAs would actually increase the number of uninsured by some 350,000.

And that's only the beginning of the problem. Insurance is supposed to spread risk: Rather than a few people (the very sick) losing everything and most people (the healthy) getting off scot-free, everybody pays a little bit. That's what company health plans do. But HSAs would encourage the well-off and the healthy to pull out of group plans; the more that do so, the higher the rates rise for the sicker folks remaining, leading more people to drop out. That's the vicious cycle that has driven up both insurance costs and the number of uninsured. Bush's plan would accelerate it.

The second element of Bush's "ownership society" is the privatization of Social Security accounts. Social Security is another form of insurance—insurance against the risk of making bad investments, the risk of outliving your savings, the risk that a disability keeps you from working, or the risk of being widowed. (To some extent, it also treats the possibility of earning a low income as a risk, giving low-earning workers a higher return on their payroll taxes than high-earning workers.) The program is designed to spread those risks among the working population.

But Bush insists that workers "need to own and manage their own pension and retirement systems." He proposes that, instead of giving your payroll taxes to support somebody else's retirement, you should be able to keep some of

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it for yourself. Unfortunately, there is an arithmetic problem with that idea. Right now, payroll taxes go to fund people who are currently retired. If that money were instead diverted into the individual accounts of those still in the workforce, it would open up a huge financing hole (at least $1 trillion over a decade). And remember, Social Security is already facing a financing hole as it is.

Beyond the shaky math, there's a deeper philosophical principle at stake. If you control your own retirement, you have a better chance of striking it rich in the stock market. But you also have a better chance of losing your money. In other words, privatization concentrates the risks on the individual, making impossible the risk-spreading that's the entire point of Social Security. As former Bush I Treasury official and current Yale Law School tax professor Michael Graetz told *National Journal*, "ownership of assets does not spread risks in the way that insurance does."

THE LAST ELEMENT of the "ownership society" is Bush's plan to cut taxes on investment income (again). Bush has pitched this idea as a way to modernize and expand pension coverage for workers, but his actual proposal—which he offered up in his 2004 budget but quickly withdrew—bears no relationship whatsoever to this goal.

The problem Bush purports to address is real: Americans save far too little money for their own retirements. The government has established incentives to promote savings, like Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) and Roth IRAs, but they haven't proved particularly effective. The average worker in the middle fifth of the income distribution has a paltry $7,200 in his IRA.

One problem is that low- and moderate-income workers tend to spend all the money they have. Another problem is that, as noted above, IRAs work by offering tax deductions, and tax deductions are worth far more to those at the top than those at the bottom. People in the top tax bracket get 35 cents back from the government for every dollar they deposit into an IRA. People in the bottom tax bracket get 10 cents, and the 33 million workers who don't pay income taxes get nothing. So it's not surprising that these accounts are mainly used by the affluent. And most studies have found that they don't encourage new savings. Mostly they're a windfall for those who would have saved the money anyway.

To "fix" this situation, Bush wants to take all the elements that don't work and make them bigger. His plan creates new accounts very similar to IRAs—they would be called Lifetime Savings Accounts, Retirement Savings Accounts, and Employer Retirement Savings Accounts. They differ from IRAs mainly in that they would eliminate the income ceiling that limits which families can transfer money into Roth IRAs and allow them to deposit even more money tax-free. (All in all, Bush's new savings accounts would allow a family to shelter $45,000 per year tax-free.) In other words, most people have the right to put away $3,000 a year, but they don't do it, and Bush claims that somehow they will if only you let them put aside more. The logic seems to be: Everybody says they're too stuffed to try a piece of my homemade casserole, but maybe they'll take it if I offer them even more casserole.

Bush's economists can't be stupid enough to think this will work. The real intent of the plan is to take another step toward the conservative dream of a revenue system that taxes only wage income and exempts investment income altogether. The problem is that, by giving such generous retirement tax shelters to those at the top, employers may feel less need to provide companywide pension plans for their (less well-off) workers, given that their own needs can be met through an individual government savings account.

It's tempting to conclude that the "ownership society" won't actually come to pass if Bush is reelected—that it's merely rhetoric generated by campaign strategists concerned that the president lacks a second-term agenda. And that might be. But it's important to remember that Bush used the 2000 and 2002 elections to spur his redistributionary agenda, even though the Republicans won both times in spite of, not because of, his economic proposals. Right now Bush faces strong public opposition to his economic record and has avoided spelling out the details of his plans. If he wins, it won't be on the strength of the "ownership society"—but that won't stop him from claiming next year that the people have demanded new upper-bracket tax cuts and privatized Social Security. ■

Generals used to be neutral.

Officer Politics

BY LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

MERRILL "TONY" MCPEAK doesn't like George W. Bush. But it's more than that. McPeak has *contempt* for the president, which he freely expresses. Speaking from his home in Oregon, the John Kerry partisan describes Bush in terms usually employed by the likes of *MoveOn.org*. "Not even his best friends would accuse this president of having ideas," McPeak says. Mild stuff in the age of Michael Moore. Except that McPeak's first name is General.

The former Air Force chief of staff is not the only general describing the president in such vivid terms. On behalf of the Kerry campaign, an entire phalanx of generals—McPeak, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili, former Supreme Allied Commander for Europe Wesley Clark, Army Lieutenant General Daniel W. Christman, and a parade of eight others that the Kerry campaign set loose at the martial-themed Democrat-

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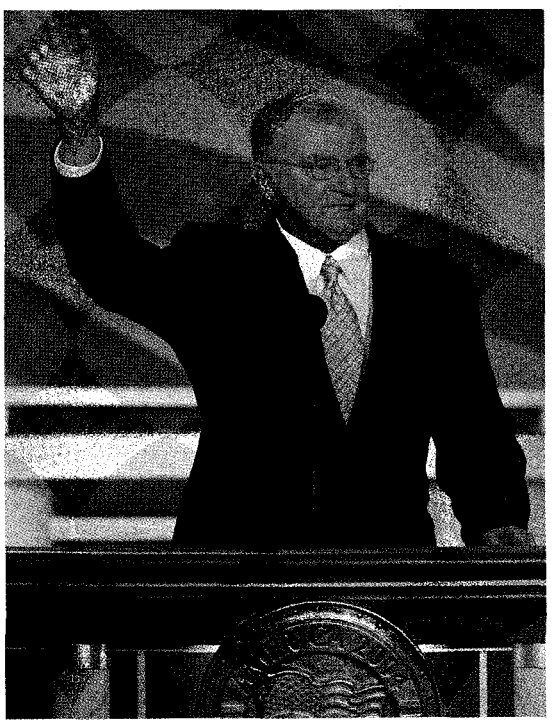
ic convention in July—has taken to the airwaves in what a Kerry press release trumpets as an "unprecedented display of support from the military establishment." They've been touting Kerry's war record, and the president's lack of one, ever since.

This week, the Bush team responded in kind, boasting of 100 admirals and generals who have endorsed the president. And, though the Democratic convention had to make do with an address by the mild-mannered Shalikashvili, Republicans gathered in New York were treated to the folksy Texas wisdom of Army General Tommy Franks, fresh from invading Afghanistan and Iraq and barely out of uniform. Like Kerry's generals, Bush's generals—who include former Air Force Chief of Staff Ronald Fogelman, former Marine Corps Commandant P.X. Kelley, and Medal of Honor recipient Army General Pat Brady—won't confine themselves to touting the martial prowess of their chosen candidate. They'll also tear his opponent to pieces.

Thus begins a quadrennial ritual, in which the two campaigns vie to squeeze as many generals as possible onto their convention podiums and into our TV sets. And this year, the competition is fiercer than ever. "It really tells you something about John Kerry," says one of his aides, "that so many high-ranking officers would line up behind him." Not so, says Brady. "There are a miniscule number of general officers supporting Kerry," he says, "and I've talked to three times that number who support Bush." During a presidential contest in which both sides have embraced militarism as a campaign theme, such statements may not seem particularly notable. Over the long term, however, showcasing generals in the political arena harms both the services and the civilians who must control them.

UNTIL A DECADE ago, the practice of senior officers endorsing politicians was virtually unheard of. True, from Ulysses S. Grant to Dwight Eisenhower, the United States boasts a long tradition of generals endorsing *themselves*. But, when a general runs for president, he openly presents himself as a partisan. Absent is any pretense of neutrality and, hence, any room to create the impression that, because a retired officer endorses candidate X, that candidate enjoys the unanimous support of the military establishment. In fact, in his 1957 book *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel P. Huntington estimated that, in the period following the rise of a professional officer class during the Civil War, not one in 500 officers even cast a ballot. Nearly a century later, General George C. Marshall refused to vote while on active duty, making no secret of his rigid neutrality. Rather, the principle of subordination to civilian control and nonpartisanship at the heart of American military professionalism encouraged retired officers to follow the lead of General Omar Bradley, who opted to "hold my tongue and keep my name out of the papers." This nonpartisan ethos began to erode after Vietnam, with the advent of the all-volunteer—and, because of self-selection, increasingly conservative—force, which embraced, and was embraced by, a GOP that billed itself as the defender of the military.

This mutual admiration intensified during the Reagan and George H.W. Bush presidencies, but the clearest evidence that partisanship had infected even the most senior generals came, oddly enough, in the form of a Democratic endorsement. In 1992, Bill Clinton persuaded former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William Crowe to support him publicly during the height of the controversy over whether Clinton had avoided the Vietnam draft. (Crowe was rewarded with an ambassadorship to Great Britain.) Picking up where Clinton left off, Bush rolled out the endorsement of no less than 27 flag-rank officers in 2000, prompting an Al Gore aide to remark to *The New York Times*, "This is the kind of thing you see in the Third World—all these generals lining up behind politicians." Today, by contrast, neither Bush nor Kerry share Gore's compunctions. While Bush has continued collecting generals, Kerry, too, has been wooing them for over a year—in green rooms, dinners at his Georgetown mansion, and phone calls from the candidate and his national security adviser, Rand Beers. Nor did Kerry's quest end with the Democratic convention; he continues to solicit endorsements from the brass culled from lists of officers put together by his own generals.



Former General John Shalikashvili, who endorsed John Kerry at the Democratic convention, is one of many officers undermining the military's political neutrality.

GARY HERSHORN/REUTERS PHOTO ARCHIVE/NEWSCOM

For their part, many generals say that, while they would prefer to remain nonpartisan, today the stakes are too great to remain silent. In fact, retired generals in both the Bush and Kerry camps agree on two points. First, that active-duty officers have no right to engage in partisan political activity; and second, that they themselves have every right to do so. Even Christman, a former superintendent of West Point, sees no harm in offering his endorsement to Kerry. "There's a clear red line between officers on

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active duty and retired officers," Christman says. "But, after retirement, there is no reason we cannot participate in the political process." Echoing this assessment, Brady says, "The idea that a retired general officer loses his citizenship is insane."

But the issue isn't sanity; it's propriety. To begin with, the line distinguishing retired generals from active-duty generals isn't so clear, and the campaigns have done their best to blur it. As Richard Kohn, the nation's preeminent scholar of civil-military relations, puts it, "Those in the know understand that four-stars never really 'retire' but, like princes of the church, embody the core culture, and, because of their experience and diversity, collectively represent the military community as authoritatively as the active-duty leadership." Whether shuttling back and forth to the Pentagon offices of their protégés, consulting for the Pentagon, or sitting on the boards of military contractors, in name and influence, they remain generals for life. Yet, the retired generals insist it is self-evident that they speak for themselves, not the establishment that made them. Thus, in response to an op-ed earlier this month in which military historian Eliot Cohen criticized the retired generals, Shalikashvili wrote a letter to *The Wall Street Journal* objecting that officers "have spoken as individuals, rather than for the military institution." But, if so, why did the Kerry campaign bill Shalikashvili's endorsement as evidence of "unprecedented support from the military establishment?" And why did Shalikashvili open his speech to the Democratic convention with the caveat, "I do not stand here as a political figure. Rather, I stand here as an old soldier"? Retired Marine Corps General Bernard Trainor, who directed Harvard's National Security Program, sees through these explanations. "If these guys didn't have the name 'General,'" he says, "what value would they have? They're being exploited for their titles, and it politicizes the military."

The harm, indeed, accrues mostly to the military establishment on whose behalf the generals pretend to speak. When generals take to the hustings, politicians respond by treating the military as if it were an interest group like the AFL-CIO or the NAACP—a constituency to be coddled, as Republicans have done since the Reagan era, or ignored and treated with suspicion, the response of many Democratic legislators during the same period. The practice also exacts a price in public confidence. "The military, along with the Supreme Court, is the most respected public institution because it is viewed as nonpartisan," says Duke University's Christopher Gelpi, co-author of the new book *Choosing Your Battles: Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*. "When the public views the military as a special interest out for pork, as it certainly has done before, it distrusts the military like any other lobbyist."

Nor is the problem solved when both parties compete for the affections of generals. If the pattern of senior officers retiring and endorsing candidates becomes the norm, it won't be long before generals find themselves promoted on the basis of political affiliation rather than expertise. What president, after all, would want advice from an officer who, a year from now, might be denouncing him on the *Today* show? (The Clinton team didn't; in at least one instance, it asked a candidate for promotion what party he belonged to.) Politicization, then, creates the danger that presidents will end up with yes-men rather than military professionals, a phenomenon whose downsides became famously apparent when Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Maxwell Taylor surrendered his critical faculties during the run-up to the war in Vietnam.

The politicization also may have a longer-term pernicious effect. There is a reason—beyond the Constitution—that political neutrality and military professionalism go hand in hand: As the nonpartisan ethos of the Armed Forces weakens, so, too, can traditional measures of military effectiveness. "Politicization erodes the cohesion, morale, and professional dedication of the officer corps," says Kohn, who points to a hemorrhage of officers during the Clinton era as evidence of what follows when the military adopts partisan views and expectations. And it has: According to a survey taken by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies before the 2000 election, 64 percent of officers identify with the Republican Party, twice the percentage who did two decades before, and only 8 percent list themselves as Democrats. Given recent history, this may stand to reason. But, now more than ever, the Armed Forces need to be able to retain officers, maintain morale, and operate effectively, regardless of the party in the White House.

ALAS, HAVING CALLED the generals out of retirement, the politicians may find they won't easily go back to the barracks. By inviting senior officers into the political arena, Kerry and Bush have sent a message that it is legitimate for the officer corps to take sides on politically charged issues. It is a message that needs no encouragement. Asked about the propriety of retired flag officers endorsing political candidates, Christman rightly notes that it has been over two centuries since the threat of a coup hung over the republic. But the danger isn't as dramatic as a coup; it is that the military may gain undue influence over decisions that, properly understood, remain the exclusive property of civilians. During the '90s, the Armed Services swelled with such contempt for their civilian superiors that service chiefs had to admonish subordinates to behave themselves in front of the commander-in-chief; at the top, the same chiefs publicly opposed White House policy on issues ranging from gays in the military to U.S. intervention in Bosnia. Asking generals to vet our presidential candidates simply encourages more of the same.

The campaigns, filled as they are with p.r. specialists and Ivy League interns who view military officers as anthropological totems, do not understand the implications of their own actions. But do the generals? In Boston for the Democratic convention, Wesley Clark insisted that former military officers "have an obligation at this time in our nation's history to speak up and be heard." No, they don't. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Marriages and Murders

MARITAL FIDELITY HAS always had a stressful time in drama and fiction and film, but in recent decades it has come under even more stress. Obviously this is because it is under more stress in the life around us. The Beast of the Apocalypse is not about to devour true marriage and genuine love, but nowadays our society accepts more widely than it used to do that the marriage contract does not fully accommodate the facts of emotional experience. By now, if an intelligent up-to-date spouse in a film wanted to split because of the other spouse's affair, the scene might have a faint touch of mildew.

WE DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE
(Warner Independent)

COLLATERAL
(DreamWorks)

At any rate, this latter-day acceptance is the ambience of **WE DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE.** The screenplay by Larry Gross, derived from two novellas by Andre Dubus, fixes on two couples, both of the men on the faculty of a small college in a small town, both of the wives intelligent and alert, all of them sensitive to sexual radiation. In the course of the story each husband sleeps with the other man's wife, the other two learn in time of this behavior, and all four accept it—with different degrees of readiness but without schism.

It is very much to the point of the film that these four are not degenerate animals. Each knows what he or she is doing and has worked out a rationale—reason glandularly tempered—for his or her behavior. Though this is never mentioned, we can see that their motives have something to do with private dissatisfaction in their lives, not sexual yet with extramarital sex as a possible emollient. At different moments the camera glides from one "mixed" couple making love to the other similarly engaged—and the music is Beethoven's First, not *Così Fan Tutte.*

Part of their rationale, consciously or not, is that they are aware of that ambience in which they and the film reside. These four people never note the matter, but surely, informed and aware as they are, they would have seen films and plays and read novels about modern marital acceptances. Possibly, since modern self-consciousness is so enveloping, they see themselves as characters in their film. They certainly have some sense of familiar pattern. When Edith, wife of Hank, is undressing for her first encounter with Jack, husband of Terry, she says wryly to Jack, "How do you think we're going to be caught?"

The dialogue is as fresh and sharp as it ought to be. The characters, though the four are a bit more alike than they would want to believe, see their individualities with such conviction that we accept a degree of self-deception. Each in the course of the film investigates his or her resentments and deprivations and needs—and, especially for the men, some sense of failure—but fundamentally they are four people ensnared in a time when questions are more available than answers. The story concludes, of course, but its gist is in its transit, not its finish. A moment stands out. One day Jack speaks in one of his classes about Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, that mountain of pain and transcendence, and when a student asks what Ivan got from his travail, Jack replies that he found God. The phrase sounds odd in Jack's mouth. There is no sense of supervising order in his life.

The film was directed by John Curran, who made *Praise* a few years ago and who here does fine, close, and intimate "chamber" work. The cinematography by Maryse Alberti is of the most desirable kind: it creates mood and drama without ever being ostentatious about it. But it is the acting that truly realizes the film.

Through the century or so since the film medium was invented, we can trace a basic change in acting for the screen. At first it was theater acting, which was gradually condensed but is still on hand and, when good, is still very welcome. (See anything with Meryl Streep or Christopher Plummer.) But gradually there grew in film a kind of acting conceived for the camera (Spencer Tracy, Jean Gabin), and with the arrival of television this concentration intensified. Obviously actors have always used their faces, but in the last few decades actors have come to use the camera as a confidant—a collaborator, almost a part of their persons. Curran understands this matter and has shot a great deal of the film in close-up, medium and large, with actors who understand why. His film is an example of what might be called (riskily) facial acting.

The cast relies on degrees of quick expression and transition that would be difficult to project in a theater and yet are certainly not mugging. Naomi Watts, who is Edith, doesn't have an especially distinguished face, but it delicately conveys conflicting thoughts and feelings. Laura Dern, as Terry, has a more exceptional face and, though she italicizes a bit, it becomes a kind of journal of her inner life. Peter Krause, as Hank, comes from television and, wondrously enough, has a real face, not one of those plastic ones so common on the small screen. Krause has thought considerably about Hank and presents a good deal of a man who is trying to cling to hope as a novelist and poet at the same time that he doesn't want to miss sensual compensations that come along.

Most striking of all is Mark Ruffalo as Jack. Ruffalo, with a face that is the common man's apostrophized, makes Mark a man sentenced to the dailiness of even a reasonably happy life. Quite aware of his misdeeds, he has long since stopped worrying about them: he shrugs invisibly, seeing his dalliances as private rewards for the shortcomings of existence. Ruffalo's talent and his instinct for verity serve the camera well.

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Ruffalo has a secondary role, adequately handled, in COLLATERAL, Tom Cruise's new vehicle. My dictionary has six definitions of the word "collateral," none of which connects with the title of this film; still, that's the least of its problems.

Cruise attempts here to return to acting, instead of starring. Here he flashes very few smiles and has only one scene with a woman—a middle-aged woman in a hospital. The story takes place in one night. He plays a contract killer in Los Angeles who hires a taxi to take him to a series of jobs and finds a way to force the driver to go through with the trip. Cruise is perfectly acceptable in the part, focusing as best he can on creating a desolate sociopath who does what he does because he can't see any credible reason for not doing it.

But the screenplay by Stuart Beattie, which wants to be some sort of Manichaean exploration of a dark soul contrasted with the benignity of the driver, is patchy realism garnished with Hollywood hokum. The killings that Cruise commits are carried out either where conveniently there happens to be no one else on the street or in the middle of a nightclub where no one tries to stop him or report him. He slugs his way out of difficulties when he needs to, and then runs when he needs to. Lord, how he runs. I kept thinking that this man ought to have been a boxer or an Olympic champion instead of a mere murderer. And to do it all in one night! The director, Michael Mann, remembers the best of film noir pretty well, but it doesn't protect his film against its ultimate Movieland silliness. ■

Seamus Heaney

The Door Stands Open

Czeslaw Milosz, 1911–2004.

FOR QUITE A WHILE NOW, THOSE who knew Czeslaw Milosz couldn't help wondering what it was going to be like when he was gone. In the meantime he more than held his own, writing away for all he was worth in Kraków, in his early nineties, in an apartment where I had the privilege of visiting him twice. On the first occasion he was confined to his bed, too unwell to attend a conference arranged in his honor, and on the second he was ensconced in his living room, face-to-face with a life-size bronze head and torso of his second wife, Carol. His junior by some thirty years, she had died from a quick and cruel cancer in 2002, and as he sat on one side of the room facing the bronze on the other, the old poet seemed to be viewing it and everything else from another shore. On that occasion he was being ministered to by his daughter-in-law, and perhaps it was her hovering attentions as much as his translated appearance that brought to mind the aged Oedipus being minded by daughters in the grove at Colonus, the old king who had arrived where he knew he would die. Colonus was not his birthplace, but it was where he had come home to himself, to the world, and to the otherworld; and the same could be said of Milosz in Kraków.

"The child who dwells inside us trusts that there are wise men somewhere who know the truth": so Milosz had written, and for his many friends he himself was one of those wise men. His sayings were quoted, even when they were wisecracks rather than wisdom. A few days before he died I had a letter from Robert Pinsky, telling of a visit last month to the hospital where Czeslaw was a patient. "How are you?" Robert asked. "Conscious," was the reply. "My head is full of absurd bric-a-brac." It was the first time I had ever detected a daunted note in any of his utterances. A couple of years earlier, for example, a similar inquiry from Robert Hass had elicited the reply "I survive by incantation"—which was more like him. His life and works were founded upon

Seamus Heaney received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995. His new book, THE BURIAL AT THEBES: A VERSION OF SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE, *will be published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in the fall.*

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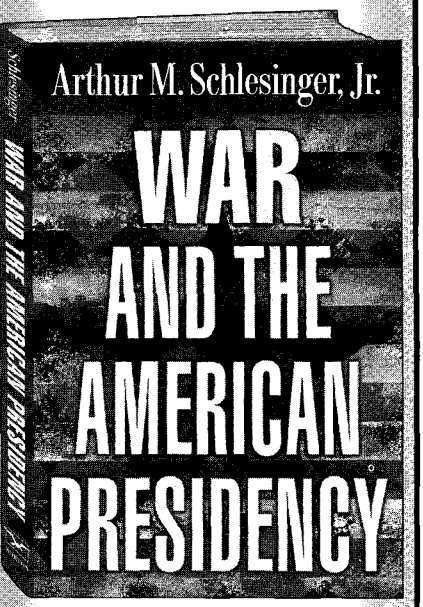

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faith in "A word wakened by lips that perish."

This first artistic principle was clearly related to the last Gospel of the Mass, the *In principio* of St. John: "In the beginning was the Word." Inexorably then, through his pursuit of poetic vocation, his study of what such pursuit entailed, and the unremitting, abounding yield of his habit of composition, he developed a fierce conviction about the holy force of his art, how poetry was called upon to combat death and nothingness, to be "A tireless messenger who runs and runs / Through interstellar fields, through revolving galaxies, / And calls out, protests, screams" ("Meaning"). With Milosz gone, the world has lost a credible witness to this immemorial belief in the saving power of poetry.

HIS CREDIBILITY was and remains the thing. There was nothing disingenuous about Milosz's professions of faith in poetry, which he once called philosophy's "ally in the service of the good," news that "was brought to the mountains by a unicorn and an echo." Such trust in the delicious joy-bringing potential of art and intellect was protected by strong bulwarks built from the knowledge and experience that he had gained at first hand and at great cost. His mind, to put it another way, was at once a garden—now a monastery garden, now a garden of earthly delights—and a citadel. The fortifications surrounding the garden were situated on a high mountain whence he could view the kingdoms of the world, recognize their temptations and their tragedies, and communicate to his readers both the airiness and the insights that his situation afforded. In one of his poems he compares a poem to a bridge built out of air over air, and one of the great delights of his work is a corresponding sensation of invigilating reality from a head-clearing perspective, being liberated into the authentic solitude of one's own being and at the same time being given gratifyingly spiritual companionship, so that one is ready to say something like "It is good for us to be here."

Milosz was well aware of this aspect of his work and explicit about his wish that poetry in general should be capable of providing such an elevated plane of regard. Yet as if to prove the truth of Yeats's contention that without contrarieties there could be no progression, he was equally emphatic about poetry's need to descend from its high vantage point and creep about among the nomads on the plain. It was not enough that the poet should be like Venus in Auden's poem "The Shield of Achilles," looking over the shoulder of his artifact at a far-off panorama that included everything from kitchen comedy to genocide. The poet had to be down there

COURTESY ARION PRESS

JIM DINE, *Czeslaw Milosz*, 1989

with the ordinary crowd, at eye level with the refugee family on the floor of the railway station, sharing the smell of the stale crusts that the mother is doling out to her youngsters even as the boots of the military patrol bear down on them, the city is bombarded, and maps and memories go up in flames.

Awareness of the triteness and the tribulations of other people's lives was needed to humanize the song. It was not enough to be in the salons of the avant-garde. Certain things, as he says in "1945," could not be learned "from Apollinaire, / Or Cubist manifestos, or the festivals of Paris streets." Milosz would have deeply understood and utterly agreed with Keats's contention that the use of a world of pain and troubles was to school the intelligence and make it a soul. The discharged soldier of "1945" has received just such schooling:

> On the steppe, as he was binding his bleeding feet with a rag
> He grasped the futile pride of those lofty generations.
> As far as he could see, a flat, unredeemed earth.

And what, in these drastic conditions, has the poet to offer? Only what has accrued to him through custom and ceremony, through civilization:

> I blinked, ridiculous and rebellious,
> Alone with my Jesus Mary against irrefutable power,
> A descendant of ardent prayers, of gilded sculptures and miracles.

Tender toward innocence, tough-minded when faced with brutality and injustice, Milosz could be at one moment susceptible, at another remorseless. Now he is evoking the dewy eroticism of some adolescent girl haunting the grounds of a Lithuanian manor house, now he is anatomizing the traits of character and misdirected creative gifts that led some of his contemporaries into the Marxist web. From start to finish, merciless analytic power co-existed with helpless sensuous relish. He recollects the fresh bread smells on the streets of Paris when he was a student at the same moment as he summons up the faces of fellow students from Indochina, young revolutionaries preparing to seize power and "kill in the name of the universal beautiful ideas."

No doubt the intensity of his early religious training contributed to his capacity to let perpetual light shine upon the quotidian, yet this religious poet was inhabited by another who was, in a very precise sense, a secular Milosz, one afflicted by the atrociousness of the *saeculum* he was fated to live through. The word "century," usually preceded by the definite article or the possessive pronoun, first-person singular, repeats and echoes all through his writing. It was as if he couldn't go anywhere without en-

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countering, as he does in his poem "A Treatise on Poetry," "The Spirit of History ... out walking," wearing "About his neck a chain of severed heads." And it was his face-to-face encounters and contentions with this "inferior god" that darkened his understanding and endowed everything he wrote with grievous force.

His intellectual life could be viewed as a long single combat with shape-shifting untruth. "The New Faith" upon which the communist regimes were founded was like the old man of the sea, a villainous fallacious Proteus who had to be watched, wrestled with, held down, and made to submit. Just how much stamina and precision this entailed can be seen in the almost inquisitorial prosecution of argument and accusation that characterizes *The Captive Mind*, the book that he introduced like a bell and candle between himself and his Polish contemporaries who had succumbed to the Marxist tempters. The sense of personal majesty which developed around him in old age derived in no small measure from his having survived this ordeal, which sprung him into solitude and left him a wanderer, as capable in the end of self-accusation as he had been of accusation.

ONCE, AFTER A POETRY reading at Harvard where, as I later wrote, he had seemed to combine the roles of Orpheus and Tiresias, he said to me, "I feel just like a little boy, playing on the bank of a river." And the poems convinced you that here, too, he was telling the truth. In fact, Milosz gave the lie to Eliot's line that humankind cannot bear very much reality. The young poet who started out with his peers in the cafés and the controversies of Warsaw in the 1930s was present when those same young poets were dying in the gunfire during the Warsaw Uprising, their memorials little more than graffiti in the rubble of the devastated city. The old man, the sage of Grizzly Peak Boulevard in Berkeley, veteran of the Cold War, hero of Solidarity, friend of the pope, was at once the child "who receives First Communion in Wilno and afterwards drinks cocoa served by zealous Catholic ladies" and the poet who constantly heard "the immense call of the Particular, despite the earthly law that sentences memory to extinction."

A Confession

My Lord, I loved strawberry jam
And the dark sweetness of a woman's body.
Also well-chilled vodka, herring in olive oil,
Scents, of cinnamon, of cloves.
So what kind of prophet am I? Why should the spirit
Have visited such a man? Many others
Were justly called, and trustworthy.
Who would have trusted me? For they saw
How I empty glasses, throw myself on food,
And glance greedily at the waitress's neck.
Flawed and aware of it. Desiring greatness,
Able to recognize greatness wherever it is,
And yet not quite, only in part, clairvoyant,
I knew what was left for smaller men like me:
A feast of brief hopes, a rally of the proud,
A tournament of hunchbacks, literature.

CZESLAW MILOSZ

—translated by Czeslaw Milosz and Robert Hass

I know Milosz's poems only in translation, but they come through so convincingly in the "target language," you forget that their first life is in Polish. Reading him in English, you are in thrall to a unique voice, a poetry cargoed with a density of experience that has been lived through and radiated by an understanding that has rendered it symbolic. It's not just that one trusts the ear and the accuracy of those poets who have done the translating, although their contributions in this regard have been indispensable. It's more that one can hardly not intuit the sheer weight of human presence, prose content, and musical transmission that must subsist in the original, away beyond our linguistic reach. The poetry as a whole is eminently comprehensible and unignorable. It is equally well supplied with occasions of surprise and recognition. It can move from sumptuous evocation to solo articulation. Its easy-as-breathing cadences, its often unexpected simplicity (as in a bewitching early poem such as "Encounter") and its equally unexpected but persuasive obliquity ("Far West," for instance) convince you of the truth of Milosz's frequent claim that his poems were dictated by a daimon, that he was merely a "secretary." Which was another way of saying that he had learned to write fast, to allow the associative jumps to be taken at a hurdler's pace, not to give "the meddling intellect" too much time to intervene. When he tells us that his poem "*Ars Poetica?*" was written in twenty minutes, I believe him and rejoice.

Part of the secret and much of the power came from his immense learning. Milosz's head was like one of those Renaissance theaters of memory. Schoolboy Latin, Thomist theology, Russian philosophy, world poetry, twentieth-century history, the dramatis personae of the age (many of whom were his close companions)—you have only to read a few pages of Milosz's copious prose to realize how present all of this was to him, and how flimsy and inadequate the old cliché "a well-stocked mind" turns out to be in his case. The poetry is the fine flower of an oeuvre that extends to autobiography, political argument, literary criticism, personal essays, fictions, maxims, memoirs, and much else that is original, frolicsome, ominous, more or less unclassifiable.

Other poets have written voluminous prose. Among his near contemporaries in English one can think of Hugh MacDiarmid and W. H. Auden, both gifted with vigorous intelligence and a rage for order. But MacDiarmid, for all his compendiousness, seems to protest too much. Auden is closer, in that he too is compelled to examine the middle state of human life and can never forget the border states of beast and angel; but compared with Milosz, Auden tends toward donspeak, and doesn't appear to suffer as much from the complicating drag of the contingent: you get serious speculation, but it tends to lack the interesting impairment of specific personal gravity. I love Milosz because there is such guarantee in his tone, a guarantee that the performative prose-writing persona is being kept under constant scrutiny by a more penitent, more punitive side of himself. What we get in the prose, as in the poetry, is the speech of the whole man.

AND YET MILOSZ WAS ALWAYS impatient with "the insufficiency of lyric," as the poet Donald Davie expressed it, and indeed the insufficiency of all art,

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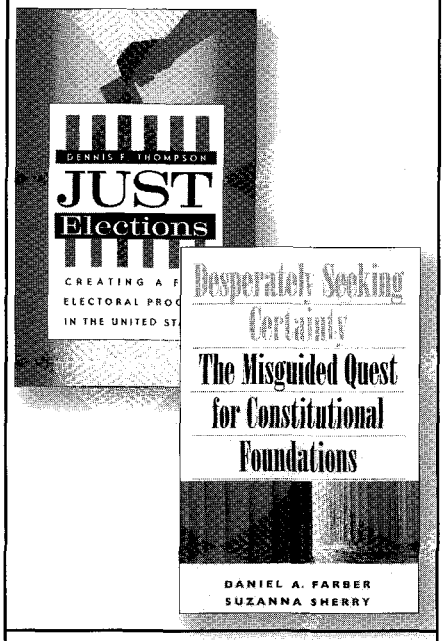

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deeply conscious of the unattainability of the reality that surrounds us. His yearning for a more encompassing form of expression than is humanly available was a theme to which he returned again and again. "Arranging colors on a canvas is a paltry thing compared with what calls out to be explored." Yet he also exulted in the certainty that he was called as a poet "to glorify things just because they are," and maintained that "the ideal life for a poet is to contemplate the word *is*."

In pursuit of this ideal, Milosz brought poetry beyond the chalk circle of significant form and opened it to big vistas and small domesticities. His poems sometimes have the head-on exclamatory innocence of child art ("O happiness! To see an iris"), sometimes the panoramic sweep of synoptic historical meditation, as in "*Oeconomia Divina*":

> I did not expect to live in such an
> unusual moment...
> Roads on concrete pillars, cities of
> glass and cast iron,
> airfields larger than tribal dominions
> suddenly ran short of their essence
> and disintegrated...
> Out of trees, field stones, even lemons
> on the table.

Yet by diagnosing the onset of this lightness of being Milosz effectively halted it for his readers, and much of his staying power as a poet will continue to reside in his exemplary obstinacy, his refusal to underprize the thickness of the actual and the sovereign value that can inhere in what we choose to remember. "What is pronounced strengthens itself./What is not pronounced tends to non-existence."

THINKING OF CZESLAW DURING these past months, seeing him in my mind's eye marooned on his bed, visited by friends yet always with his eye fixed steadily on the life-obliterating wall ahead, I couldn't help but see him also in the light of two works of art that have about them a typically Miloszian combination of solidity and spiritual force. The first is Jacques-Louis David's painting, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, of the death of Socrates. The sturdily built philosopher is on his high bed, bare to the waist, finger in the air, sitting upright and expounding to his crowd of friends the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The picture could well carry as an alternative title or caption the words "I permitted myself everything except complaints"—a remark made by Joseph Brodsky, which Milosz quoted with high approval and which could apply with equal justice to Milosz himself.

And the other work, probably brought to mind by that tableau of Milosz face-to-face with the bronze likeness of his wife, is an Etruscan sarcophagus in the Louvre, a mighty terra-cotta sculpture of a married couple reclining on their elbows. The woman is positioned on the man's left side, couched close and parallel, both of them at their ease and gazing intently ahead at something which by all the rules of perspective should be visible in the man's outstretched right hand. But there is nothing to be seen there. Was it a bird that has flown? A flower that has been snapped away? A bird that is approaching? Nothing is shown, yet their gaze is full of realization, as if they are in the process of settling for the bittersweet answer Milosz provided to his own question to life:

> Out of reluctant matter
> What can be gathered? Nothing,
> beauty at best.
> And so, cherry blossoms must suffice
> for us
> And chrysanthemums and the full
> moon.

I WAS IN OUR BACK GARDEN, IN sunlight, among flowers, when the call came. There was a fullness about the morning that was Californian. An unshadowedness that recalled his poem "Gift," written in Berkeley when he was sixty: "A day so happy./Fog lifted early, I worked in the garden./Hummingbirds were stopping over honeysuckle flowers...." Thanksgiving and admiration were in the air, and I could easily have repeated to myself the remark that he once made to an interviewer, commenting upon his epigram "He was thankful, so he couldn't not believe in God." Ultimately, Milosz declared, "one can believe in God out of gratitude for all the gifts." So when the cordless phone was carried out and I heard the voice of Jerzy Jarniewicz, I knew what the news would be, but because I had been long prepared, I wasn't knocked askew. Instead, there was an expanding of grief into the everlasting reach of poetry.

In the Dublin sunlight, the figure of the poet in his hillside garden above San

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Francisco Bay merged with the figure of Oedipus toiling up the wooded slope at Colonus, only to disappear in the blink of an eye: when I looked he was there in all his human bulk and devotion, when I looked again he was not to be seen—and yet he was not entirely absent. There and then I could have repeated the words of Sophocles's Messenger as he reports the incident which for all its mysteriousness has the ring of a common truth:

He was gone from sight:
That much I could see...
No god had galloped
His thunder chariot, no hurricane
Had swept the hill. Call me mad,
if you like,
Or gullible, but that man surely went
In step with a guide he trusted down
to where
Light has gone out and the door
stands open. ■

Sherwin B. Nuland

The Death of Hippocrates

When medicine turns evil.

I.

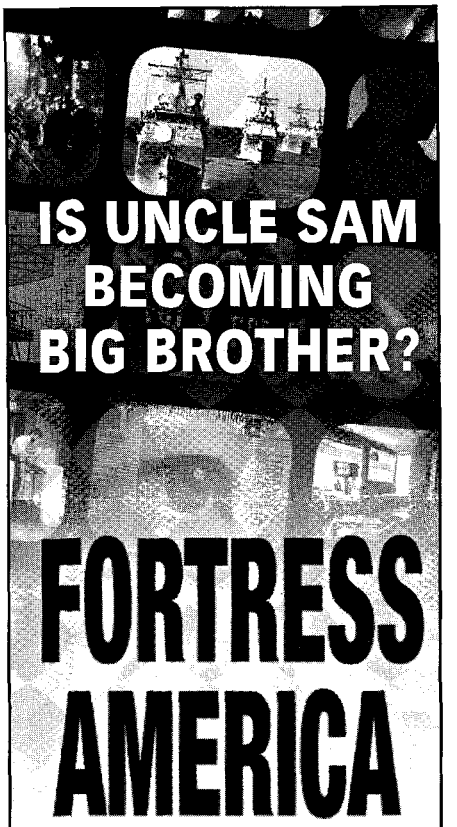
IN A COURT OF LAW, A WITNESS becomes a person who testifies. What he has seen or heard is transformed into what he describes. Intended or not, the nuances and subtleties of his narrative, the variations in pitch of his voice, the expressions on his face, and the very way he holds his body—all of these are editorial comments on his words, and even those words convey feeling. He has been affected by the experience that he describes, and no amount of restraint or force of will can prevent his listeners from perceiving its influence on his thoughts. He is a man transmitting not only an account but an opinion, too, and everyone who watches and listens while his narrative unfolds will perceive what that opinion is. Some witnesses do this deliberately, while some attempt to speak without an iota of judgment. But even with the most determined detachment, every man or woman who testifies communicates a viewpoint. That viewpoint becomes the context in which his observers reach their conclusions, for they have indeed seen and heard the evidence through his eyes and his ears, and filtered it through his mind and his mouth.

DEADLY MEDICINE: CREATING THE MASTER RACE
(United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

I found myself thinking about these matters a few weeks ago, shortly after my first visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. I had spent two days there, viewing the extraordinary exhibition that runs until October 16, called "Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race." I devoted the first day to the materials I had come to study and the second to the permanent exhibit. The conclusions I reached about my experience were the result of a process that I realized only in retrospect was fostered by the atmosphere that must surely be among the strongest of the influences that the museum has had on the nearly twenty million men, women, and schoolchildren who have visited it since its opening in 1993. By this I mean that the Holocaust Museum is not a place of testimony, it is a place of witness.

The scenes, the artifacts, the reconstructions, and in some instances the sounds of the rise and the fall of the Third Reich and its Final Solution are laid out before the visitor without editorial comment, real or implied. They are accompanied by text that is descriptive, factual, and clear, containing precisely the amount of information necessary to explain what is being presented at each location in the building. In aggregate, the sequence of legends forms an eminently readable narrative of the events of that time and place. It is just that: narrative—no more, no less. Not

Sherwin B. Nuland is clinical professor of surgery at Yale and the author of How We Die *and* Lost in America: A Journey With My Father *(Knopf).*



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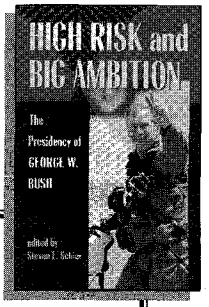

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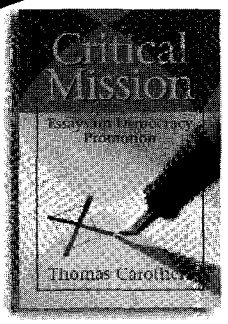

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until near the end of the permanent exhibit, where one hears the voices of the soldiers who liberated the camps, is there an iota of testimony. Only in the final moments of a visitor's pilgrimage to these horrors does he see interviews in which the survivors speak of their experiences. And even here the stories, though told with obvious anguish, are singularly devoid of condemnation of the brutes who are their reason for being. These elderly men and women are simply telling what they lived through.

Of all the reasons for the immense power of the museum's permanent exhibition, this one—its stature as a witness whose effect is not diluted by unnecessary testimonial attempts to persuade—may be the most forceful. As seen by visitors on a spectrum ranging from teenagers to survivors themselves, from the middle-aged children of those survivors to the middle-aged children of the worst of the perpetrators—to each of them and each of us—the Holocaust Museum has been a place to learn, to look within oneself, and to ponder the nature of our shared humanity. There is no need to tell us what to think.

The diversity in the range of responses to the museum cannot but be as wide as the diversity of its visitors. But some reactions are certain. The great majority of people will be horrified by what they see, particularly if they had only minimal knowledge of its vicious magnitude beforehand. Predictably, there will be very few who will, for whatever reason, somehow find themselves empathizing with those who carried out these contemptible acts, and fewer still, if any, who can put themselves in the place of those who instituted the policies that led to them. And this is precisely why I was so taken aback by my own response to the material presented in "Deadly Medicine." To my startled dismay, I found myself understanding why so much of the German medical establishment acted as it did. I realized that, given the circumstances, I might have done the same.

II.

THE EXHIBITION DETAILS THE influence of eugenics on determining Nazi policy from the time of the party's assumption of power in 1933 until the end of World War II. But its curator, the accomplished Susan Bachrach, has wisely chosen to begin her narrative long before that time, briefly sketching the intellectual background against which the notion that biology is destiny achieved its authority. Though some have thought of it as an applied science, eugenics is in fact more a philosophy than a science. Its proponents based their notions on genetics, having as their purpose the improvement of the breed. The word was defined exactly that way in 1911 in a book by the eminent American biometrician and zoologist Charles Davenport, director of the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, New York (elected to the National Academy of Sciences in the following year), who called it "the science of the improvement of the human race by better breeding."

Eugenicists believed that it is possible, and even a good idea, to attempt to enhance the quality of our species by regulating the reproduction of traits considered to be inheritable. Thus, couples who demonstrate characteristics believed to be beneficial to society are given incentives to have children, while those who are judged to be in the opposite category are subjected to disincentives or prohibitions. A convinced eugenicist does not hesitate to recommend forced sterilization for those who might not voluntarily submit. In these ways, the "desirables" are multiplied and the "undesirables" gradually disappear from society.

The thesis of eugenics arises from the late nineteenth-century principle known as social Darwinism, the belief that not only individuals but also social groups such as races and nations are in constant competition for achievement and even survival, with certain inherent traits being maladaptive and others beneficial. As conceived by proponents of this theory of intergroup struggle, the laws of natural selection apply just as they do in Darwin's theory of evolution, which means that societies evolve in much the same manner as individual species, by the method to which the British philosopher Herbert Spencer gave the name "survival of the fittest."

At the personal level, social Darwinism was used to justify the dominant position of the upper classes, since their perceived moral and intellectual superiority was the reason for their attainments, as opposed to the lower station of the less well endowed. At the social level, nations or ethnic groups of seeming poorer abilities or drive were treated with the disdain appropriate to their inferior qualifications, a philosophy that

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provided a rationale for imperialism and racism. When Gregor Mendel's forgotten experiments on inheritable characteristics were rediscovered in 1900, a certain biological legitimacy was conferred on these notions, as unknown factors (later shown to be genes) were identified as the source of traits immutably passed on to offspring, and it was perceived that some are dominant and others recessive.

Such a background led quite logically to the acceptance of the notion of eugenics, a word that had been introduced by Charles Darwin's cousin Francis Galton in the late 1860s to give a name to his thesis of selective mating to improve human possibilities. Though the basis of social Darwinism—and with it eugenics—was gradually discredited after perhaps the late 1940s, it was for more than half a century a major influence on prominent thinkers, particularly in those countries considering themselves among the natural leaders of the world. I refer here not to a lunatic fringe, but to men whose opinions were highly regarded by serious social and scientific commentators. Once the Mendelian laws of heredity were widely known, eugenics movements were founded in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Russia, several of the nations of Europe, and even Latin America and Asia. Eugenics research institutes were established in more than a few of these countries, most prominently the United States, England, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. The work done in these places was well funded and taken very seriously by many leading scientists, often becoming the subject of influential and widely read books and journal articles.

Not unexpectedly, eugenics was a creed that appealed to social conservatives, who were pleased to blame poverty and crime on heredity. Liberals—or progressives, as they were then usually called—were among its most vigorous opponents, considering the inequities of society to be due to circumstantial factors amenable to social and economic reform. And yet some progressive thinkers agreed with the eugenicists that the lot of every citizen would be improved by actions that benefited the entire group. Thus were the intellectual battle lines drawn.

IT IS HARDLY SURPRISING THAT National Socialism in Germany would embrace the concept of eugenics. But from the beginning, there was more to Nazi support than the movement's political appeal or the promise of its social consequences. As is clear from the exquisitely structured and thoroughly reliable accounting of "Deadly Medicine," the stage was set for the emergence of a drive toward a uniquely German form of eugenics long before the average citizen had ever heard of Adolf Hitler. It was based on seemingly scientific evidence derived from the studies of highly regarded researchers. Not surprisingly, an endowed chair for the study of "racial hygiene," as the Germans called eugenics, had been established at the University of Munich as early as 1923, the year after Sweden created the State Institute for Racial Biology in Uppsala.

The earliest hint of the coming storm had appeared around the turn of the twentieth century, when the German biologist August Weismann definitively showed that changes acquired by an organism during its lifetime cannot be inherited. Weismann's findings overthrew a theory promulgated a hundred years earlier by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, holding that such adaptations could be passed down to succeeding generations. So-called Lamarckianism had incited controversy since its inception, and its debunking added fuel to the fire of those who believed that human beings inherit not only fixed physical characteristics but also mental and moral ones. When intermixed with the flammable material of social Darwinism and eugenics, the notion of the inevitability of one's biologically determined lifetime patterns took on a scientific certainty that catalyzed research by a variety of workers.

Though some of these researchers were rabble-rousing quacks, many were serious scientists whose aim was to discover ways in which the very best of the inherited characteristics might be encouraged and the very worst eliminated, with the ultimate goal of curing the ills of society. This was the work of the eugenics research institutes and similar groups, whether of the most or least legitimate sort. As the "Deadly Medicine" exhibition notes, "By the early 1900s, proponents of eugenics everywhere began to offer biological solutions to social problems common to urbanizing and industrial societies." The First International Eugenics Congress was held in London in 1912, and was attended by experts from all over the world. Ironically, among the best known of those who believed in the concept of degenerate individuals and groups were two prominent Jewish thinkers, the criminologist Cesare

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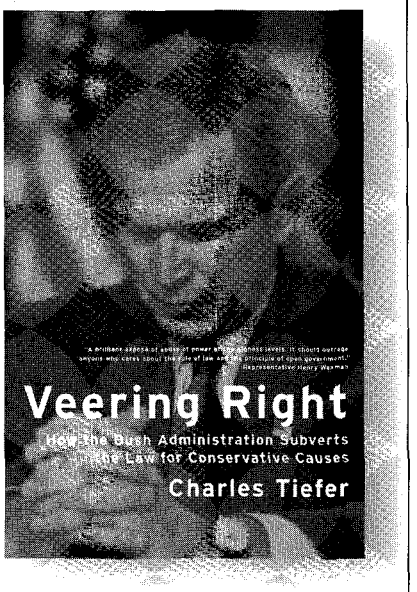

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Lombroso and the physician and cultural critic Max Nordau.

THE EXHIBITION'S "EVERYWHERE" means not only countries such as the United States, Britain, and Germany, which were among the leaders in such endeavors, but other nations throughout the world. To large numbers of its host of well-meaning adherents, eugenics was a scientifically and even mathematically based discipline, and many of them actually thought of it as a measurable, verifiable branch of biology that held the promise of becoming an enormous force for good.

Though it must be admitted that the United States, Britain, and Germany became centers for eugenics in part because of each nation's certainty of its own superiority over all peoples of the world, the fact is that these countries were hardly more chauvinistic than most others. The primary reason they led in eugenic studies is traceable to a far more significant factor: their leadership in science. Around the turn of the twentieth century, the American scientific establishment had recently begun the upward surge that would by the 1940s result in its dominance until the present time; and England and Scotland had since the seventeenth century been the source of one major discovery after another. But the basis upon which eugenic philosophies were able, in the long run, to gain more ground in Germany than elsewhere may lie in a point not sufficiently emphasized by "Deadly Medicine." Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, German-speaking universities and research centers had been the unquestioned leaders in medical science.

The German-speaking institutions were so far ahead of those of every other nation that leading clinicians, researchers, and educators in Europe, Asia, and the Americas considered their training incomplete unless they had spent a period of study at such centers of learning and innovation as Berlin, Würzburg, Vienna, and Bern, or one of the small academic gems among the many outstanding universities in Germany, such as Göttingen, Heidelberg, or Tübingen. Though World War I wreaked havoc on Germanic medical hegemony, the country's reputation as a bastion for such studies as pharmacology, biochemistry, pathology, anatomy, physiology, and clinical medicine continued to influence its image throughout the world, especially as seen by German physicians themselves and by the citizenry that supported them. The meticulous German mind, it was generally accepted (and not only by Germans), was uniquely suited to research in medicine and its allied sciences.

Herein lies my only criticism of the Holocaust Museum's exhibit. It does not properly emphasize the legitimacy that lay at the basis of the German fascination with the notion of improving the population by means of principles that their scientific and cultural history had convinced them were authentic. The Germanic medical establishment was heir to a grand tradition of accomplishment and international respect; when it took on eugenics as a worthy goal, it was convinced of the righteousness of its intent. Even when some of its own members began to voice concerns about the direction in which the research and its application were going, many authoritative voices drowned out the relatively few protests.

The process rolled on within a worldwide cultural milieu conditioned by the universally accepted belief that the earth's population was divided into races, and further subdivided into ethnic groups within them. The notion of the German *Volk*—a distinctive nation of cultural and heritable unity characterized by ancient tribal ties of purebred blood—had permeated the society since the early Middle Ages, the idealized *Mittelalter* of legend, when it first took root. With that vaunted heritage came the particular arrogance that went beyond even the chauvinism of so many other peoples. Add the conviction of a scientific basis to this mixture, and the result is a product so incendiary that it was destined to destroy not only those against whom it was intended but its promulgators as well.

THE RISING POWER OF THE international eugenics movement manifested itself in predictable ways, from anti-immigration laws to compulsory sterilization for those deemed unfit, enacted in such "progressive" countries as Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and parts of Canada and Switzerland—as well as the United States, where some two dozen states had enacted sterilization laws by the late 1920s. The most dramatic moment for Americans came on May 2, 1927, when the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the state of Virginia's intention to carry out tubal ligation on a "feebleminded" young woman named Carrie Buck, who had given birth to an illegitimate daughter also judged to be retarded, as was Carrie's mother. Writing the majority opinion in *Buck* v. *Bell*, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. stated:

> It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. The principle that sustains compulsory vaccination is broad enough to cover cutting the Fallopian tubes.... Three generations of imbeciles are enough.

To a twenty-first-century sensibility, the equation with vaccination is at the very least questionable, but at the height of eugenic thinking, the eight-to-one majority among the justices reflected the general mood of a nation fifteen of whose states (the only ones of the twenty-seven reporting) would by 1933 have sterilized 6,246 of the insane, 2,938 of the feebleminded, fifty-five epileptics, sixteen criminals, and five persons with "nervous disorders." More than half of these procedures were carried out in four state mental hospitals in California. In almost every state, the law applied only to residents of public facilities, which meant that lower-income groups were affected far out of proportion to their numbers in the population. Some sixteen thousand Americans would eventually be sterilized.

AT THIS TIME GERMANY HAD not yet enacted any sterilization laws, in spite of strong advocacy and much expression of admiration for the American system by the so-called racial hygienicists. All of this foot-dragging ended when Hitler came to power in 1933, and it ended with a vengeance. Taking effect on January 1, 1934, the German Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring went far beyond those in any other land, being compulsory for all people suffering from disabilities designated as hereditary, including feeblemindedness, schizophrenia, manic-depressive disorder, Huntington's disease, severe physical deformity, and chronic alcoholism, as well as forms of blindness, deafness, and epilepsy judged to be genetic in origin. Between 1934 and 1945, some four hundred thousand

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people would be forcibly sterilized, most before the war began in 1939. These included, in 1937, about five hundred racially mixed children of German mothers and black colonial soldiers in the French army occupying the Rhineland.

The basis for sterilizing these children was the outgrowth of the notion that a hereditarily gifted nation can retain its greatness only if the heredity remains pure, a thesis that had been widely accepted in Germany (and by many citizens of other countries as well, including our own) for generations. Though the Nazi sterilization program was at first independent of the party's policy toward the Jews, the notion of maintaining racial purity was its necessary accompaniment. By 1937, the principle of pure blood had manifested itself in many ways, most particularly in the persecution of Jews and the passage of the Nuremberg laws of 1935, officially called "the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor," by which marriage and sexual relations were prohibited between Jews and people of "pure" German blood. Shortly thereafter the Reich Citizenship Law went into effect, declaring that only "Aryan" Germans were citizens and Jews were to be considered "subjects." This law defined who was a Jew and who was a so-called *Mischling*, an individual of mixed parentage. From these beginnings as an outgrowth of eugenics—itself a misconceived attempt toward utopia—Nazi racial policy would culminate in the murder of millions and the near-annihilation of European Jewry.

By 1937, the moral slippage since the Nazi takeover had become considerable. A concept that had been thought to be based on science had been transmogrified into the doctrine of German racial purity, which, in the hands of the Nazis, was being taken far beyond its original meaning. Misconceived as the movement was, eugenics had never been overtly intended by its proponents as a weapon of racial warfare or political domination. But the concept had been hijacked. In Germany, eugenics was now *Nazi* eugenics, by which the party claimed a scientific basis for its own unique form of racism. "National Socialism is the political expression of our biological knowledge" became a much-used slogan, and one credited by ordinary people. The theorists and the scientists who had until 1933 been able, and sincerely so, to claim detached objectivity for their research, could no longer delude themselves about the purposes for which it was being used. With the ascent to power of the Nazis, they had become, willy-nilly, active participants in the beginnings of genocide.

III.

ALL OF THIS IS MADE VERY clear in "Deadly Medicine," as the events leading up to the Final Solution unfold with a chilling inevitability. The exhibition, beyond describing the work of those participating in the many eugenic and twin studies, does not detail the early and massive involvement of the German medical profession with the Nazis. This would require a completely different exhibition, and I would encourage the museum one day to mount it. Dedicated physicians who live by today's four principles of medical ethics—beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice—and who unquestioningly embrace the ancient Hippocratic injunction to "do good or at least do no harm" need to examine the ways in which the nobility of their calling can be subverted by forces not only from without but also from within. The infamous degradation of medicine to the purposes of the Nazis is in its own way as important to study as the Holocaust itself. No association or guild was more complicit in the rise of Nazism and the desecrations committed by its leaders and followers than the profession of medicine, in the form both of its organizations and its individual members. This needs to be more widely known, and not only by today's doctors. In our shame, great lessons are to be learned.

Initially under the guise of eugenics, the grisly hand of medicine-gone-bad eventually reached into virtually every aspect of the Nazi death machine, though it was nowhere so odiously overt as in the wartime "research" using concentration-camp inmates. These studies form a relatively small part of "Deadly Medicine," focused as it is on the overriding subject of Nazi eugenics, where physicians again and again participated in ways that were as murderous as though they had themselves been officers in Himmler's SS (as in fact so many of them were). Among them was the eugenically justified euthanasia program that was the forerunner of the gas chambers.

Hitler had long considered instituting a euthanasia program, but he realized that such an undertaking might not

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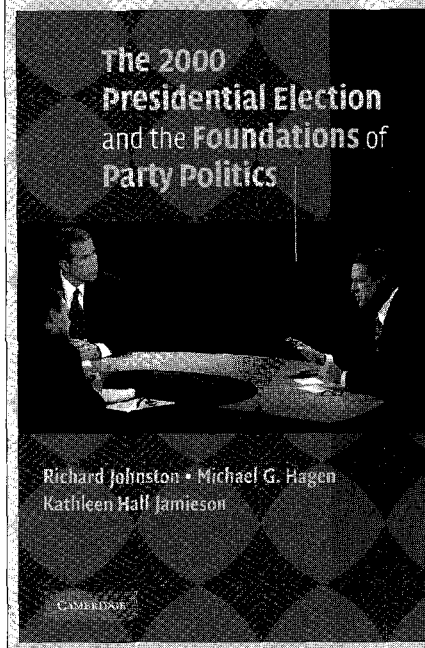
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yet be palatable to the average citizen. Knowing that measures unacceptable under ordinary conditions are less difficult to implement during the national emergency of wartime, he postponed his plans until late in 1939, when he used a small pretext to launch his large-scale effort to rid the country of severely disabled children. The process began in July of that year, when a family petitioned the government to authorize "mercy killing" for their baby born with major deformities. Using that case as an opening, the Reich Ministry of the Interior ordered that the birth of any infant with such a condition as idiocy, hydrocephaly, phocomelia, spina bifida, or paralysis of any significant sort be reported.

The parents of these children and of others similarly afflicted, up to their teen years, were told that high-quality treatment was available for them in any of thirty specialized wards in various parts of the country, which were in fact killing centers. Though most of the children were murdered with drugs, some were simply left to starve. In each case, the parents were notified that death had occurred of natural causes. This program, in which five thousand children up to the age of sixteen lost their lives in the first large-scale action, was supervised by three Berlin pediatricians.

THE MURDER OF CHILDREN WAS only the beginning. In October, 1939, Hitler authorized euthanasia for adults housed in German asylums. A division of the Chancellery was put in charge of the effort, which would have to be much larger in scope than that inflicted on the children. Since it would also require far more efficient methods of murder, carbon monoxide delivered through fake showerheads became the technique of choice. The entire operation, called T-4 for its headquarters at Tiergartenstrasse 4 in Berlin, was supervised by physicians. A group of leading psychiatrists chose the victims from a registry that recorded such information as their disabilities, the frequency with which they had visitors, and their aptitude for work. Those marked for death were transported by rail from temporary holding places to the centralized execution facilities. Between January, 1940 and August, 1941, some seventy thousand adult patients were gassed, their only crime being that they were unproductive members of the Nazi state.

As described in the excellent volume designed to accompany the museum's exhibit (which, unlike the museum, does allow itself some occasional editorial comment),

> The facilities were staffed by specially selected physicians and nurses.... If the senior medical professionals ... were eugenics enthusiasts, they were also very much tantalized by their unaccustomed proximity to real power. They, in turn, used their prestige and influence upon impressionable (and fanaticized) former students, who became the killers in white coats—students being one of the groups in the population converted almost en masse to Nazism. The physicians' presence was only essential to give mass murder a medicalized appearance, since literally anyone could turn on a gas valve. These doctors now functioned as intermediary technicians, whose ethical training was perfunctory or nonexistent. Many had become accustomed to regarding patients as an assemblage of malfunctioning mechanical parts or, simply, a nuisance. Many of them were not immune to careerism, greed, or political fanaticism.

There, in a few sentences, is summarized so much of the explanation for medical complicity in the crimes of the Nazis. But the passage does omit several other factors, among them the long history of academic anti-Semitism that characterized the German universities. And it mentions only by implication one of the most significant components of the profession's embrace of eugenics: namely, that such a large proportion of doctors had believed it to be based on the legitimate scientific principles that had served Germanic medicine so well for almost a century, and many still chose to nurture what they must by then have realized was a fantasy.

THOUGH A LARGE PROPORTION of the German populace allowed itself to be deluded by such terms as "mercy killing," foreign observers were not restrained in attempting to expose what was really going on. "Deadly Medicine" contains a reproduced page from the May 5, 1941 issue of this magazine, in which Michael Straight, under the headline "Germany Executes Her 'Unfit,'" wrote as follows:

> [Persons] were not killed for mercy. They were killed because they could no longer manufacture guns in return for the food which they consumed; because the German hospitals were needed for wounded soldiers; because their death was the ultimate logic of the National Socialist doctrine of racial superiority and the survival of the physically fit.

But far worse was to follow. "The ultimate logic" would soon be extrapolated far beyond what Straight might have imagined, as it was extended to the Final Solution. The expulsion and coerced emigration of Jews had been going on almost since the Nazis attained power, but a new strategy for ridding Germany and eventually Europe of the pestilential disease of Judaism was near implementation. Even before the invasion of Russia in June, 1941, General Wilhelm Keitel signed an order permitting the SS to set up killing units once the attack began. On January 20, 1942, the Wannsee Conference established the policy that would lead to the Holocaust, and from then on the real question became not whether but how. The *Einsatzgruppen*, special squads of SS and police, had been following the German army as it penetrated ever more deeply into the Soviet Union, killing a million Jews and others in open-air shootings. But the combination of the public nature of such a method, its labor-intensity, and the psychological effect on the executioners of personally murdering men, women, and children at close range drove Heinrich Himmler to seek some improved means of carrying out his objective. What better example could have been found than the highly efficient—and eugenic—work being carried out by the T-4 program, including its utilization of rail systems for transporting victims?

In essence, the T-4 operation was copied in designing the killing centers that were built in Eastern Europe. Some of the most experienced of the directors of T-4 became consultants to the new program, and several were put in command of such facilities, soon to be using the infamous Zyklon B in place of carbon monoxide. The murders justified by the principles of eugenics had become the murders justified only by Hitler's vision of a *Judenrein* Europe; racial hygiene had finally revealed itself as racial hatred.

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IV.

AND IN THESE WAYS, MEDICAL science went astray. Looking back with the wisdom of hindsight, it seems so clear that eugenics had always been a dangerous notion, and that its adherents were either deluded or racist. But the fact is that such a realization was slow in coming, and appeared only after matters had gotten completely out of hand and the stage set on which horrendous events would take place. Among the several reasons that medically trained students of eugenics allowed matters to turn so ugly was their failure to recognize a basic fact about the scientific enterprise, which is well known to historians and philosophers of the subject but continues to elude even some of the most sophisticated men and women who actually do the work. Though this fact characterizes science in general, it is even more applicable to the art that uses science to guide it, namely medicine, which was, after all, the underlying source of the momentum that drove the application of eugenic principles.

The basic fact to which I refer is that neither medicine nor science itself derives its "truths" in the thoroughly detached atmosphere in which its practitioners would like to believe they work. Especially in medicine and medical research, the atmosphere not only is not detached, but it is in fact largely the product of the very influences from which its participants seek to free themselves in order to isolate observations and conclusions from external sources and subjectivity. For an early explication of this, we may with profit turn to the father of Justice Holmes, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., who was for some years the dean of Harvard Medical School and bid fair to be called the dean of American medicine in the mid–nineteenth century. Here is what the elder Holmes said in an oration delivered to the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1860, titled "Currents and Countercurrents in Medical Science":

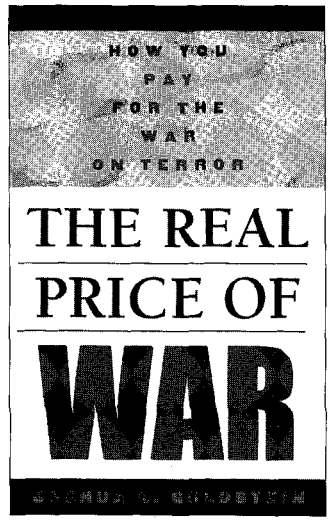
> The truth is, that medicine, professedly founded on observation, is as sensitive to outside influences, political, religious, philosophical, imaginative, as is the barometer to the changes of atmospheric density. But look a moment while I clash a few facts together, and see if some sparks do not reveal by their light a closer relation between the Medical Sciences and the conditions of society and the general thought of the time, than would, at first, be suspected.

The medical theory of any era—and to a somewhat lesser extent the science on which it is based—arises in a setting that is political and social. Not only that, but its directions and even its conclusions are influenced by the personal motivations, needs, and strivings of those who practice it, some of which may not be apparent to these men and women themselves. Though we would have it otherwise, there is no such thing as a thoroughly detached scientific undertaking. The danger in this lies not so much in its truth, but in the inability of society and the community of scientists to recognize the pervading influence of such an unpalatable reality, which flies in the face of the claims that form the groundwork for our worship of the scientific enterprise.

IT IS PRECISELY BECAUSE "DEADLY Medicine," like the rest of the Holocaust Museum, allows the story of its subject to unfold without editorializing, that I found myself so taken aback and disturbed by my response to it. Like most physicians of my generation—born within a decade on either side of World War II—I knew a great deal about the nefarious activities of the Nazi doctors, and considered their behavior an aberration to be condemned, not explainable in the ordinary terms of professional behavior and requiring a combination of socially infectious mass mental pathology and distorted nationalism to make sense of. It had always seemed obvious to me, and to the several colleagues with whom I had discussed it over the years, that none of us would ever have fallen prey to such delusions as the justification of euthanasia and then genocide. Now "Deadly Medicine" has made me doubt the certainty of those convictions.

By itself, each of the small steps taken by the eugenics movement in the early part of the twentieth century seemed not just innocuous but actually of real interest as a subject for consideration. Attached to the names of highly regarded scientific thinkers, the theories intended to improve the general level and functioning of a nation had a certain appeal to men and women concerned about social issues. Especially during the years of the Depression, when strategies were actively sought for

"engaging!"
— *Kirkus Reviews*



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the betterment of the rapidly worsening conditions under which so many people lived, the notion of encouraging the propagation of the fittest held its own attractions. The public press frequently published photographs of people so ground down and debilitated by poverty that they seemed of a different species from those who viewed them. In the contemporary literature of sociology and psychology could be found articles upholding the notion of genetically feebleminded or otherwise disadvantaged families reproducing themselves generation after generation. Many liberals agreed that the Supreme Court had made the right decision in the case of Carrie Buck, and they supported sterilization laws. Very likely, more than a few Americans would have accepted the euthanasia of severely retarded infants and older boys and girls, at least with family consent. Think only of the sympathy shown by the public and the courts even today on the rare occasions when a distraught parent puts such a child to death.

Moreover, in a world where the concept of race—and even the belief that some races are superiorly endowed or more evolutionarily advanced than others—was unquestioned, and miscegenation viewed with fear, who but a few visionaries would see any danger in the promotion of purity? But of the several considerations, the most significant would seem to have been that to most observers of the time eugenics bore the imprimatur of medical science. Unknowing or unwilling to believe that "medicine, professedly founded on observation, is as sensitive to outside influences ... as is the barometer to the changes of atmospheric density," most of us, I suspect, whether concerned laymen or scientifically trained physicians determined to benefit humanity, would have found no fault with improving the breed or even with the compulsory sterilization of certain of the retarded. Like the worthy justices of the Supreme Court, we would have felt such actions to be consistent with the spirit of the time. One can only wonder: At what point would I have turned away? At what point would I have realized the direction in which all of this was hurtling? Perhaps not until it was too late. Looking back with unbridled condemnation on the beginnings of racial hygiene does not enlighten today's thoughtful man or woman in regard to how he or she might have responded at the time.

It is specifically because neither "Deadly Medicine" nor the Holocaust Museum itself tells its visitors what to think that I found myself ruminating over these things. Though the museum's unstated message is a call for never-ending vigilance and individual responsibility, one can only wonder whether such a message should come with the caveat that we are all creatures of our time and our place, and there are limits to what can be expected. What we learn from history comes far less in studying the events than in the recognition of human motivation—and the eternal nature of human frailty.

This is not to say that there had not from the beginning been enough evil men lurking at the ready to push the notion of racial hygiene down the slope whose slipperiness they recognized long before men of goodwill awoke to the reality of what they had wrought. Nor is it to say that—even when the worst was becoming evident—many others did not continue to allow the slide to take place and to accelerate because, after all, those being sterilized and euthanized were so unlike themselves. But it is most certainly to say that there is good reason for so many wags and wise men down the centuries to have repeatedly observed that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Sometimes "anarchy is loosed upon the world" not because "the best lack all conviction," but because they firmly and honestly believe they are doing the right thing.

DOING THE RIGHT THING: there has never been a period in the modern era when our species has relaxed its fascination with the idea of improving itself. Whether as groups or as individuals, few of us have not fantasized about adding years to life, to vigor, to sexual potency. Some are content with better noses and fewer wrinkles. Many go far further than that, and look forward to a time in the near future when we might be able to order up the height, intelligence, or athletic ability of our children. Better yet, assert others with the assurance of those who honestly believe they are doing the right thing, is to incorporate these salutary changes into the very germplasm, the permanent heredity of generations of our offspring. A century ago the buzzword was eugenics. Today it is enhancement. Eugenics is meant to improve the breed and enhancement is meant to improve the individual, but they are too similar in concept to allow us to rest easy with either one.

Today's molecular biologists and geneticists have dipped a very powerful oar into the ongoing stream of debate about heredity versus environment. Every year—every month—we read about newly discovered genetic factors determining not only physical characteristics but those of morals and mind as well. Sometimes we are even told their precise locations on the DNA molecule. No one knows how much of this will hold up in the coming decades, but we can be sure that a significant proportion of it will be confirmed. Some authoritative scientific voices are telling us that we should take advantage of the new knowledge to fulfill our fantasies of improving ourselves and indeed our species.

These new findings—and the enthusiasm of some of our scientists—take us huge steps beyond the ultimately shaky theoretical platform on which the eugenics movement stood. The debate has for several years been raging between those who look to the lessons of the past and shout warnings and those who see only the utopia of an enhanced future and shout encouragement. In a powerful discourse against reproductive cloning—only one manifestation of the brave new world being foreseen—Leon R. Kass wrote in these pages of "a profound defilement of our given nature ... and of the social relations built on this natural ground." At the far other end of the spectrum is Gregory Stock, director of the Program on Medicine, Technology, and Society at UCLA and one of the new breed called "futurists," whose enthusiasm for bio-psycho-engineering (Kass's cautionary term for such feats of creativity) and a post-human future is so unbounded that he has gone so far as to title his most recent book *Redesigning Humans: Our Inevitable Genetic Future*. Inevitable! Even more frightening than the confidence of Stock's vision for his fellow men and women is the title of the book's first chapter, in which he outlines his image of how the laboratory will come to control evolution: he calls it "The Last Human," meaning those few of us remaining whose bodies and minds have been formed by nature alone.

This is genuinely terrifying stuff. Not since the first half of the twentieth century have prominent thinkers been so

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starry-eyed at the thought of controlling the future of our species, or at least that privileged portion of it that will have the financial, cultural, and other wherewithal to take advantage of the offer being presented to us. I find myself somewhat less stringent than Kass but far more stringent than Stock. Though I admire Stock for his sincerity and the magnitude of his intellect, I am sure that I would have admired more than a few of the early German eugenicists for the very same reasons had I known them as well as I know him. What concerns me is not the progression of the technology, but the inherent creeping hazards in its philosophical underpinning, which is ultimately to improve the breed.

It all sounds very familiar. Looking backward, we can now see the danger in state-enforced policies of improvement, but too many of us have yet to awaken to the equally dangerous reality of improvement that is self-determined. We are once again standing on the slope, from the top of which the future we may be wreaking is already visible. Now is the time to recognize the nature of human motivation—and the permanence of human frailty. ■

Ruth Franklin

I Beg Your Pardon

THE LEMON TABLE
By Julian Barnes
(Alfred A. Knopf, 241 pp., $22.95)

THE WRITER AT WORK, a personification of all our myths of creation, occupies a special place in the public imagination. We have those legends whose typewriters emit words in steady streams, knocking back their daily requirements each morning like multivitamins before heading off to lunch at the club. Their opposites, the beneficiaries of intermittent but ecstatic visits from the muse, appeal to the romantics who believe that in every garret hides a poet. And a third type, who struggles painstakingly over every sentence, every word even, is rewarded with a special kind of awe: he embodies both the joy of inspiration and the diligence of perfectionism. Flaubert is the model to whose specifications this stereotype was built: the classic image is of him contemplating *le mot juste* at his table, the pages of the manuscript that would become *Madame Bovary* stacked neatly at his side, growing at the painful rate of just five hundred words a week, over a total of four and a half years.

The creative model that Flaubert epitomized, the writer who whittles each well-formed line into its Platonic ideal, has lately lost its sheen: these days, writers would rather be called stylish than stylists. But Flaubert's influence healthily survives, primarily among such old-fashioned British neo-realists as Penelope Fitzgerald or Graham Swift, both writers of novels as compact and shapely as a teardrop. Their compatriot Julian Barnes may be the most prominent Flaubertian of the day, having staked his affiliation explicitly twenty years ago in the amorphous prose fiction *Flaubert's Parrot*. Not quite a novel, not quite criticism, this book established his reputation as one of the most gifted contemporary shapers of prose, possessed of a remarkable limberness of form and voice, and an unconstrained literary imagination.

Barnes's output over the last two decades has not disappointed in either its quantity or its innovativeness. His thirteen novels include two (*Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.*) that are written entirely in dialogue, and another that purports to tell the "history of the world" through a series of vignettes that include the story of Noah's ark as seen by a stowaway worm. Barnes accomplishes much of this delightfully; he can be counted on for a pleasurable romp. He has published three crime novels under a pseudonym; he has made forays into essays, translation, and the short story; and his exquisitely genteel voice inhabits a dizzying variety of personas. The narrators of *The Lemon Table*, his second collection of stories, range from the collective voice of a nineteenth-century Swedish town to a gay middle-aged London symphony patron.

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Yet novelty inevitably wears off, and once it does one wonders whether Barnes's inventions are not the fruits of creative necessity but the by-products of a show-off's fondness for turning new tricks. Behind their dazzle, his books show evidence of a short attention span: *Flaubert's Parrot* is an irresolute hodgepodge of lists and genre parodies; the dueling narrators of *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.* have a way of slipping out every time the conversation takes an interesting turn. No matter how much care he may take with his prose, Barnes really does not parrot Flaubert at all: he substitutes literary games for interiority. His entertaining characters can stay up all night talking, but one rarely has the sense that they actually feel. His fiction, as tightly constructed as a soundproof box, provides just as little access to the deeper questions within.

THIS IS A PARTICULAR PROBLEM in *The Lemon Table*, which takes as its main preoccupation the uncomfortable intermingling of sex and old age—love and death, in other words, and what could be more crucial than that? But the proximity to gravitas serves only to pinpoint Barnes's inadequacies as a fiction writer. He dreams up some nicely unconventional figures and puts them in provocative scenarios, but he fails to discover any emotion richer than a condescending pathos.

"A Short History of Hairdressing," the first story in the volume, is a typical Barnes trick: a man's life, told via three haircuts. In Part One, Gregory is a child, nervous to be visiting the barber by himself for the first time. Next, he is a college student, long-haired and stubbly, who has just been dumped by his girlfriend. Finally, he is middle-aged: he and the girlfriend evidently reconciled, as they have been married now for twenty-eight years, with two children. The haircut that started out costing one and threepence has inflated to twenty pounds, including tips. And the boy who looked upon the barber as "torturer in chief" has grown into a man adept at casual banter with his regular stylist: "It had only taken him about twenty-five years to get the right tone."

"Marriage is the only adventure open to the cowardly," Gregory had opined (quoting Voltaire) to the hairdresser in the middle segment. By the end, he has "stopped being afraid of religion and barbers"; he knows how to handle himself in the salon, even bringing an extra pound coin along "just in case they put the price up." But love still discomfits him. Barnes belabors the association between sex and haircutting—Gregory's girlfriend (now wife) used to perform oral sex on him after cutting his hair—but the connection is valid nonetheless: the awkward intimacy and vulnerability, the mind left idle to daydream or fantasize. "It had all seemed quite clear and bold, back then, when he stood up in the bath and Allie took his cock in her mouth. All that stuff had been self-evident, and imperative in its truth. Now he wondered if he hadn't always got it wrong." There is nothing bold about Gregory any longer. His great triumph at this point is refusing, when presented with the mirror, to inspect the back of his head. The hairstylist always forgets, but that doesn't matter: "In fact, it was better, since it meant that his timid victory was repeated every time." He has become what he dreaded, and he no longer has the energy to care. Aging, in this volume, is inevitably accompanied by a kind of defeat.

"WERE YOU AS YOUNG AS you felt, or as old as you looked? That was the great question nowadays," or so it seems to Major Jacko in "Hygiene." He is a retired, married military man who has made a habit, during his annual visits to London for a regimental dinner, of spending the afternoon with a lady named Babs. The two have been meeting now for more than twenty years—he no longer remembers the exact number, though he used to mark their anniversaries with gifts. On the train journey there, he reminisces affectionately about their first time together (they had sex three times in an afternoon) and their ritual of sharing a bottle of champagne at each visit (although now it is a half-bottle, and they don't usually finish even that, since she has developed heartburn). "Mostly they talked. Sometimes they slept."

The major's memories are both so fond and so tame that it comes as a shock to discover that Babs is a prostitute. When he knocks on the door of her house, another woman answers—"a tart," he thinks—and he learns that Babs has died. Confused, he tries to go through the motions anyway, but is overcome by emotion.

> Do you still want what you've come for? Oh yes, he still wanted what he'd come for, but that wasn't anything she could possibly know about. He and Babs hadn't done it for, what, five, six years? The last year or two they'd barely even sipped the champagne. He liked her to put on that mumsie nightie he was always teasing her about, climb into bed with him, turn out the light and talk about the old days. How it used to be.... You were a tiger in those days, Jacko. Quite wore me out. Used to take the next day off. You didn't. Oh yes I did. Well I never.

Barnes's superb control of language is both the excuse and the impetus for this story. More than twenty years after his retirement, the major still conducts his interior monologue in army jargon: "Each year there was something she remembered at D-Day minus thirty seconds," he glowers of his wife's tendency to load him with errands at the last moment. "Principles of Concealment, section 5b, para 12: the enemy is seldom likely to spot anything placed directly in front of his face" is his rationalization for writing to Babs via postcard rather than a letter tucked discreetly in an envelope. The interplay of voices is especially lovely in the passage above, which trails off into the clichés of pillow talk, "You didn't. Oh yes I did. Well I never": empty banter, yet when Babs's voice suddenly announces itself, breaking through the major's thoughts, she becomes suddenly, powerfully present in a way that reinforces Jacko's deep sadness at her death.

Barnes has always been infatuated with dialogue, as *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.* demonstrated, and he uses the human voice to great effect elsewhere in this collection as well. "The Things You Know," a little piece about two elderly widows who meet for breakfast once a month, could be unbearably dull but is livened by the women's savage asides about each other's clothes, habits, and late husbands. (Barnes has the rare knack of drawing characters who are just annoying enough to be amusing.) "Knowing French" is another token of Barnesian whimsy: it consists entirely of letters written to a writer named "Julian Barnes" from an elderly fan confined to an "Old Folkery." Though the conceit is stilted and all is wrapped up a bit too cutely at the end, here again Barnes pulls off the impressive feat of constructing an entire

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character out of very limited materials.

STILL, EXPERT STYLIST THOUGH he may be, Barnes occasionally loses control of his voices, and the results are jarring. In one story, called "Appetite," a man's Alzheimer's disease manifests itself in the profanity that suddenly, shockingly infiltrates his language. "He said, 'Suck my cock,' " his wife reports. "I said, 'I *beg* your pardon.' " Barnes's own language is invaded by similarly incongruous vulgarisms. Take, for instance, Gregory's fantasies in the first story: "It had all seemed clear and bold, back then, when he stood up in the bath and Allie took his cock in her mouth." There is no internal reason, narrative or linguistic, for the word "cock" here, nothing in the story to suggest that Gregory would naturally use it. Or this intrusion by the nameless narrator of "The Revival," which charts a romance between Turgenev and a much younger actress who stars in one of his plays. "Our knowing age rebukes its predecessor for its platitudes and evasions.... Love isn't a bonfire, for God's sake, it's a hard cock and a wet cunt, we growl at these swooning, renouncing people." Barnes seems to intend this earthiness as a moment of hyperrealism, a sharp jab to the complacent reader, but in these genteel surroundings it just feels ugly and out of place.

Barnes is not simply taking a schoolboy's delight in gratuitous profanity, even though it sometimes sounds like he is. At one point he seems gently to mock his own tendency to go overboard: " 'Before She Met Me' [an early Barnes novel] has been taken out [of the library] eleven times since January, you will be fascinated to know, and one reader has heavily scored through the word 'fuck' whenever it occurs. However, he has condescended to read it all the way to the last 'fuck' on p.178," the elderly lady informs her correspondent in "Knowing French." But when a writer who is otherwise as discreet as Barnes makes such lapses over and over, the nervous tic has to be seen as symptomatic of a more serious ailment.

Barnes has always been obsessed with the mechanics of sex: the frequency, the positions, the kinks. (His work includes an inordinate number of characters who pay for sex.) And in this book sex among the elderly becomes another variation on the theme, another perversion, and one that is inherently pitiable, since the mechanisms are often out of order. It is Major Jacko, fumbling with his condom as Babs's replacement smirks, or the grotesque Alzheimer's sufferer in "Appetite," who leers to his wife over a photograph of her younger self, "I'd like to do *her* tits." We may be embarrassed on behalf of these characters, but they cannot speak to us in a deeper way.

When sex is removed from the equation altogether, leaving Barnes unable to make his characters at least go through the motions, he has no idea what to do with them. This is the problem in the most peculiar story in the volume, the curiously stilted "The Story of Mats Israelson," which tells of an unconsummated love affair between two married people. It takes place in Sweden in 1898, but the atmosphere is so cold and remote that it could just as well be 1598. Anders Boden, a sawmill manager, meets his neighbor Barbro Lindwall every week on the boat up the lake, and a connection develops between them: he talks to her about whatever comes into his head, and she simply listens. Soon gossip spreads around the town and back to Mrs. Boden, who angrily confronts her husband and unwittingly helps him decide to consummate the relationship. But the next day Barbro Lindwall fails to show up; he soon learns that she is pregnant, and after that he meets her only in town, she with her husband, he with his wife.

The story takes its title from a local legend that Anders Boden recounts to Barbro Lindwall on the boat, the story of a man whose body fell into a copper mine and was discovered, perfectly preserved, forty-nine years later, identified by an old woman who had been his betrothed when he disappeared. And that, Anders Boden decides, is how he will live from now on.

> A door opens, and then closes before you have time to walk through it.... But if so, and his life, from now on, would never change, then, he realized, neither would he. He would remain frozen, preserved, at this moment—no, at the moment which nearly happened, which could have happened, last week. There was nothing in the world, nothing wife, nor church, nor society could do, to prevent him from deciding that his heart would never move again.

In this, the book's only vision of unequivocally platonic love, it becomes a force that freezes rather than liberates, as cold and fixed as death itself. "Why make the assumption that the heart shuts down alongside the genitals?" asks the narrator of "The Fruit Cage" (perhaps the best story in the collection until it derails violently toward the end), having learned that his eighty-year-old father is leaving his mother for another woman. But why not make that assumption when we are never allowed to see them working in tandem? Sex in Barnes is all loins, no fire.

Strangely, the only moment of sensuality in this sex-obsessed collection appears in the same story, but it has nothing to do with sex at all:

> Childhood comes back in smells. Porridge, custard, my father's pipe; washing powder, Brasso, my mother's scent before the Masonic dinner-dance; bacon through the floorboards as I lay in bed; Seville oranges boiling volcanically while there was still frost on the ground outside; drying mud entwined with grass on football boots.... All these smells recurred, as did the unchanging cycles of school, weather, garden-growth, and domesticity. The first scarlet break of runner-bean flowers; folded vests in my bottom drawer; mothballs; the gas-poker. On Mondays the house would throb to our washing-machine, which used to crab itself berserkly across the kitchen floor, howling and bucking, before sending, at deranged intervals, gallons of hot grey water along its fat beige tubes to spit and gush into the sink. The manufacturer's name on its metal badge was Thor. The god of thunder sits and growls in the outer reaches of suburbia.

The language here is simple and lovely, at first no more than a list of nouns, then gradually expanding into sounds, textures, feelings: one sees the cracks in the hardwood floor and the child under his quilts, hears the noise of the madly boiling oranges, feels the warmth of the vests—all the comforts of domesticity that are gradually dismantled by the son's knowledge of his father's affair and of deeper troubles between his parents that he had not known. Even the final veer into preciosity is forgivable, because it is consonant with the character's own voice. But coming at the end of this cacophonous book, the passage feels like just another mode that Barnes is trying out, another voice in his ventriloquist's arsenal. It is, in short, the work of a genuine stylist. ■

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Ghosts

HISTORICALLY, I HAVEN'T expected much from Republican presidents or, for that matter, from Republicans generally. I've pulled the Democratic lever on the voting machine more or less reflexively in the fear that, if I did otherwise, my right hand would wither, as the Psalmist warns, and my tongue would cleave to the roof of my mouth. It is true, however, that I have strayed every so often, with no visible damage to either my arm or my vocal organs. Still, the fact is that Republicans just don't engage me, so I hardly bother to argue with them at all. My arguments are on the left. I suppose it all started in childhood. In New York, where I grew up, a poll in my fourth-grade classroom had Democrat Harry Truman and Democrat-turned-communist fellow traveler Henry Wallace (FDR's third-term vice president) running neck-and-neck in the 1948 election. If I remember correctly, Tom Dewey, the GOP candidate and governor of New York, got one vote, from an African American boy. Those were the days when many blacks still voted Republican, a lingering act of fealty to Abraham Lincoln. Jews, except for Orthodox Jews, did not vote Republican, although I had a perfectly secular uncle who did.

THERE IS A DEEP DIVIDE BETWEEN Democrats and Republicans. It used to be based on the elevated principle enunciated by Matthew Arnold: "Choose equality and flee greed." Democrats signed on to this; Republicans—at least once Theodore Roosevelt left—didn't. That's still true today. President Bush has certainly not embraced equality. And many of his administration's policies virtually enshrine greed as a guarantor of the public good. Still, the breach between the parties is no longer so clear or so deep. You really can't count the pampered and petulant Hollywood (or Cambridge or Upper West Side) left as truly egalitarian. Ditto for the party's high-tech zillionaires. George Soros is certainly no egalitarian, nor is John Kerry. And Teresa? Please. Maybe Democrats feel ethically superior because they used to be egalitarians, although past tense is a shaky platform for moral arrogance.

THEY CERTAINLY FEEL SOCIOLOGICALLY and culturally superior, however. You can buy tacky T-shirts ridiculing George W.'s syntax nearly everywhere Democrats summer. And young people, who sprinkle their conversations with "like" and "I mean," wear them in the Hamptons and Malibu, in Soho and South Beach. Come to think of it, in 1992, THE NEW REPUBLIC published a book called *Bushisms: President George Herbert Walker Bush, in His Own Words*, a collection of the bizarre malapropisms and other grammatical gaucheries of the current president's father. It sold very well, like the lampooning T-shirts also available for Bush 41 that year. Evidently, he also was a dummy. Of course, Democrats now feign nostalgia for George H.W. They say he was diplomatic and respected our allies. What this really means is that Bush didn't finish the war against Saddam Hussein, and so he pleased France and Russia, both of which wanted to continue doing business with the tyrant. To hell with the people of Iraq who suffered under his boot. I was reminded this week of how Saddam's son, Uday, used to arrange for the torture of Olympic athletes who returned defeated from the Games.

PAST WARS HAUNT THIS CAMPAIGN. I would have loved to be a fly on the wall when George H.W. tried to take George W. to the woodpile over Iraq. "Forty-one," of course, came from the old foreign policy and intelligence elite. He had wanted the Soviet Union preserved, and he urged the Ukrainians, among others, not to seek independence but to stay a satrap of Moscow. He (and his secretary of state, James A. Baker III) also made a fetish out of Israel's settlements, as if, without them, the Palestinians would make an honest peace. Most salient, he favored continued minority Sunni rule in Iraq, although that rule had brought agonies to the rest of the population. His son inherited none of this, and "forty-three" has liberated himself from most of the clichés that bonded the American elect to monstrous Arab dictatorships, beginning with John Foster Dulles's decision to side with Gamal Abdel Nasser—against France (a true ally then) and Great Britain—at Suez in 1956 and onward.

JOHN KERRY IS ALSO HAUNTED BY THE first Gulf war—that is, by his vote against it. But what really haunts him is the Vietnam War. He built his political career on its infamy. In his 1971 Senate testimony, he accused other veterans, and himself, of war crimes and atrocities. ("[T]hey had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in a fashion reminiscent of Ghengis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam.") I met John when we were both peace activists. Now he is running on the glory of Vietnam and claims to have "defended" his country there. Does he believe that our country was under threat? Was this not a discretionary war? It seemed as if virtually the entire Democratic convention was devoted to his feats in the U.S. Navy, a transmutation of the party that can be explained only by its hysterical disdain for and hatred of Bush. They were saluting someone for performing heroic acts in what he (and they) thought, and doubtless still think, was an unjust military adventure.

EVEN SOMEONE AS ADROIT AT SWITCHING positions as Kerry will have trouble with this one. His cry of "foul" about hostile TV ads placed by some of his ex-comrades-in-arms is sanctimonious. Of course, the Republican Party is in cahoots with Kerry's tormentors—just as the Democrats are in cahoots with Bush's freelance tormentors. But are the charges against Kerry correct? At least one probably is: His specific claim—"seared" in his mind—at several times to have been five miles into Cambodia on Christmas Eve in 1968 (and to have come under friendly fire, no less) has drawn no support from anyone he served with. He himself has admitted that his rhetoric upon returning from the war, before a Senate committee and on "Meet the Press," was "over the top," a peculiarly bland characterization of "cut off hands, cut off heads." Maybe Kerry did commit war crimes and atrocities. Frankly, I don't believe it, despite what he said long ago. But he not only accused himself; he accused tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of his comrades. He owes them some penance and remorse.

MARTIN PERETZ

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Brown: A Great Decision—Except for Schools

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Oliver Brown—the plaintiff in the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision—sued a school board, not a public park commission, even though such facilities were also segregated. Within the private sector, discrimination was pervasive.

Yet, today, we see marked progress toward racial equality in parks, recreation programs, politics, communications, commerce, and industry—but not in schools.

The irony is all the greater, inasmuch as the Supreme Court, in *Brown,* outlawed only school segregation—on the shaky grounds that such segregation harmed the "hearts and minds" of African American children.

But at a time when the workplace is more often racially mixed than not, ***Brown*'s educational consequences remain ambivalent.** On the plus side, most school districts have become as integrated as city demographics allow. But the price paid for this integration has been high—involuntary busing that separated schools from families and communities; large, difficult-to-manage school campuses; white flight; and lowered expectations for students of all social backgrounds.

Worse, the performance of African American students has continued to trail that of whites. Although the gap narrowed in the 1980s, it opened again in the 1990s, a time when the principles of *Brown* should have been firmly entrenched.

Conventional liberals blame "politicians" for inadequate funding or "society" for its abiding, if now hidden, racism. But money has seldom bought educational progress, and one is hard put to explain the survival of racism in schools when it is on the wane elsewhere.

Conventional conservatives are more apt to "blame the victim," suggesting that the child-rearing practices of the African American family are the root cause. Yet the disparities in black and white achievement are smallest among preschoolers—the age at which family influences are pronounced and school influence nil.

Closer to the truth are those who blame Hollywood, television, and the fashion industry for fostering a drug-infested, antilearning, "hip-hop" youth culture that burgeoned in the 1990s. But if street culture is the problem, then assigned neighborhood schools are not the solution. Only in rare instances can traditional neighborhood schools suppress the seductions of their immediate environment.

Learning is better fostered when schools draw boundaries that separate classroom life from the street-culture opiates. Because good private schools have discovered this secret, African American students who attend them are much more likely than their public school peers to complete college.

Unfortunately, some still argue against school choice on the grounds that African American families are too ill-informed to pick good schools. But interest, knowledge, and commitment will come naturally to all parents, once choice is made available. To claim otherwise is racist in the extreme. **School choice is, indeed, the civil rights issue of our time.**

—Paul E. Peterson

Paul E. Peterson is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a member of the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education. He is a professor at Harvard University.

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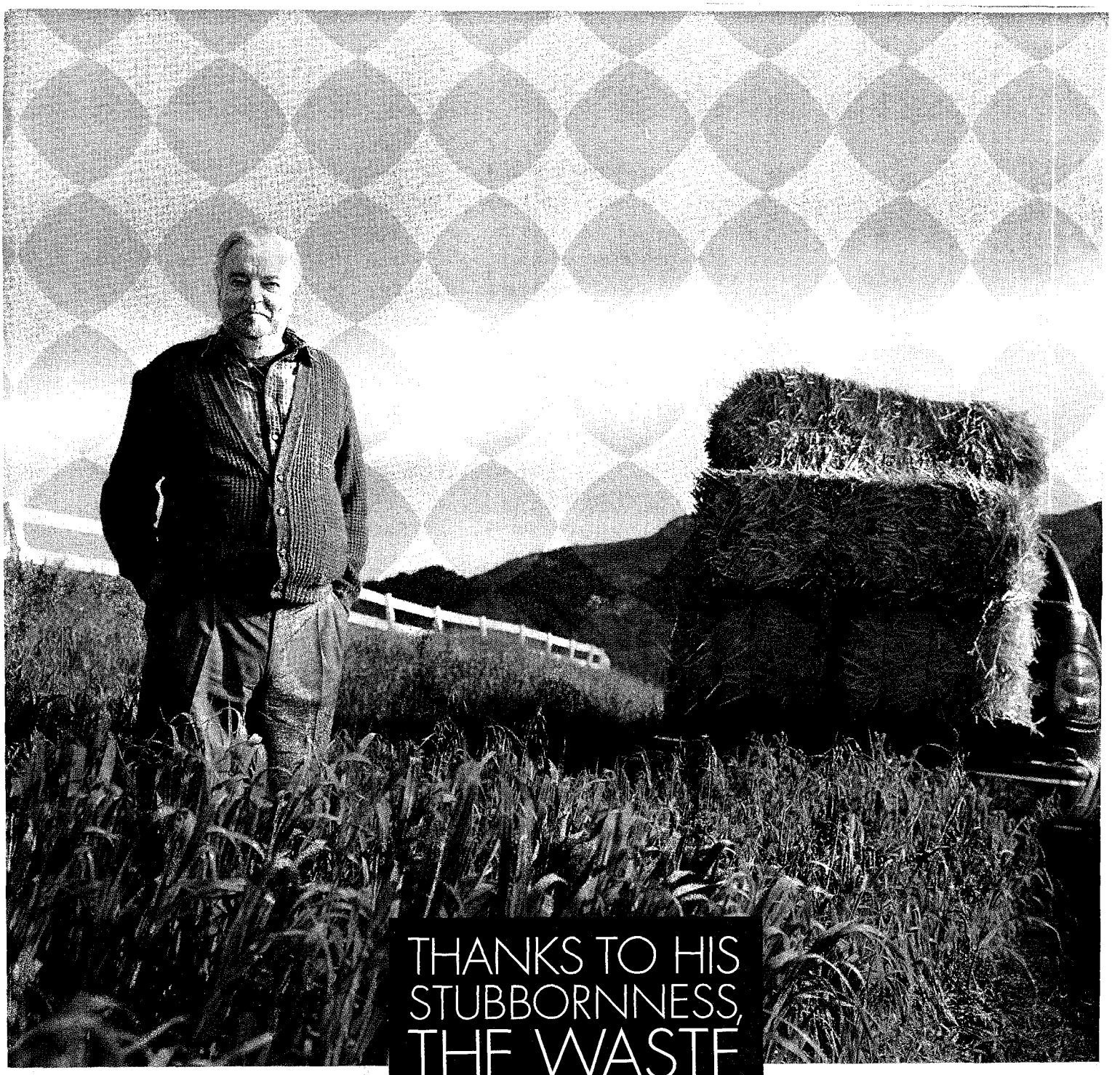

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